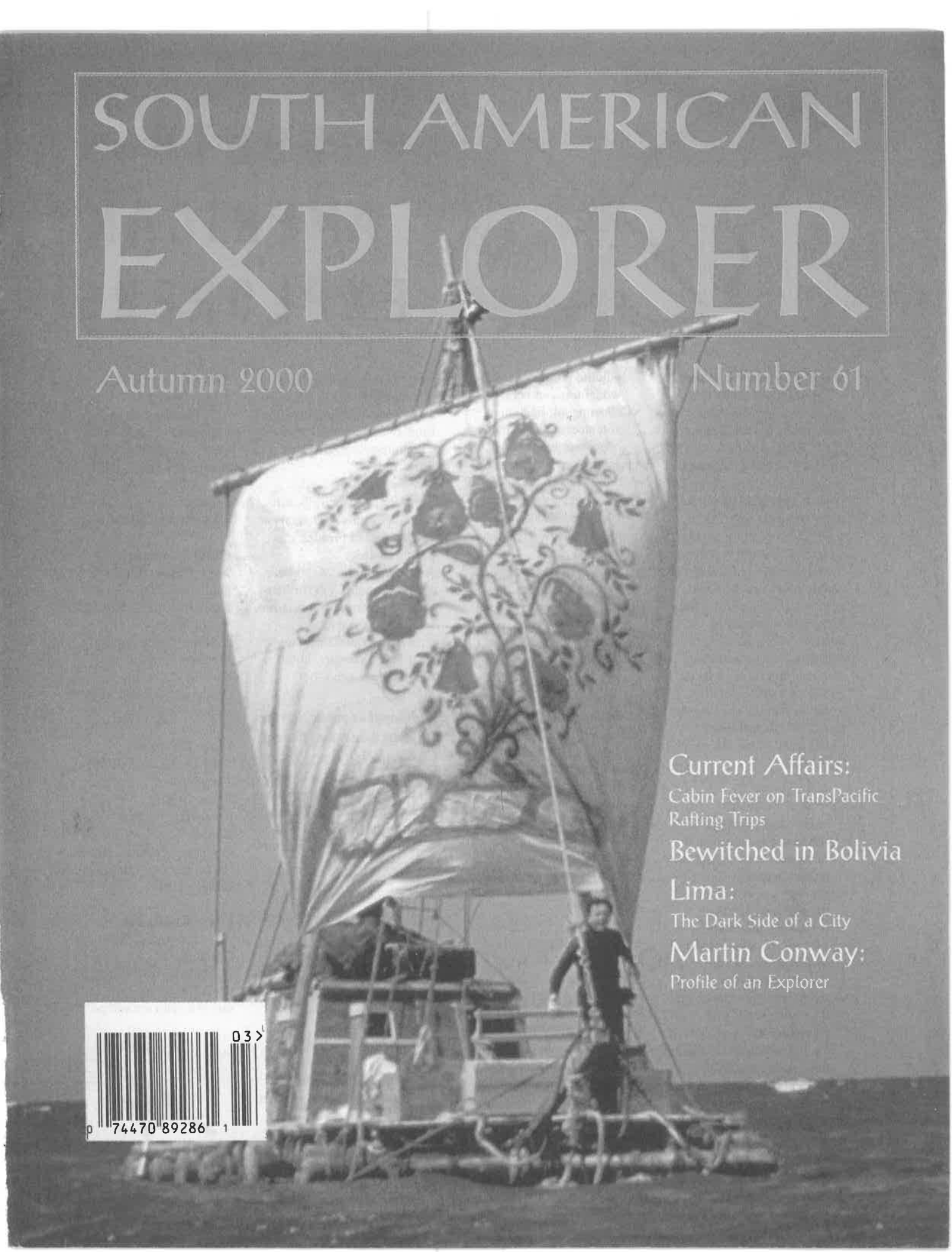
SOUTH AMERICAN EXPLORER

Autumn 2000 | Number 61



Current Affairs:
Cabin Fever on TransPacific Rafting Trips

Bewitched in Bolivia

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The Dark Side of a City

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Profile of an Explorer

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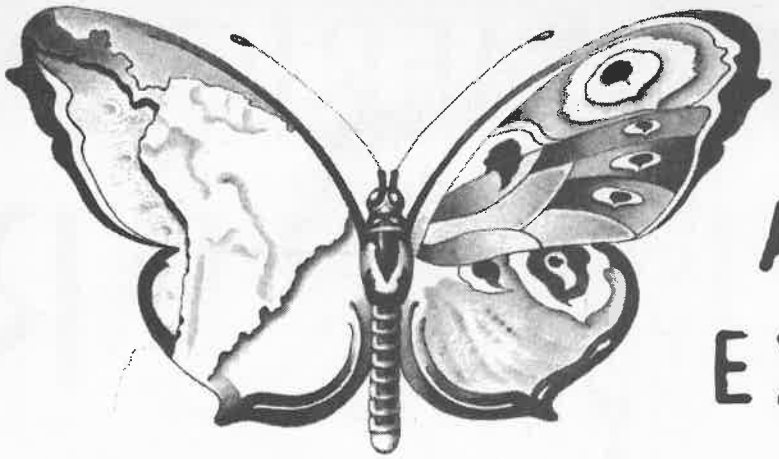

SOUTH AMERICAN EXPLORERS

South American Explorers

SAE is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. With clubhouses in Cusco and Lima, Peru and Quito, Ecuador, and U.S. headquarters in Ithaca, New York, SAE collects and makes available to its members up-to-date, reliable information about Central and South America.

Membership is US $40 ($70 couple) per year. Residents outside the U.S. add US $10 (US $7 for Canada) for postage. Those wishing to sign up in the United Kingdom can join through Bradt Publications (Please allow 4-6 weeks to receive membership cards), 41 Nortoft Road, Chalfont St. Peter, Bucks SL9 OLA, U.K.

Aims and Purposes:

SAE is dedicated to:

- Furthering the exchange of information among travelers and researchers.
- Promoting responsible travel through publication of pamphlets, information packets, the Internet, and its magazine, the South American Explorer.
- Publicizing projects aimed at improving social and environmental conditions in Latin America and collecting funds for their activities.
- Awakening greater interest and appreciation for the welfare of endangered peoples, wildlife protection, and wilderness conservation.
- Collecting information on volunteer and research opportunities.
- Fostering ties between non-profit organizations, NGO's, conservation groups, and other socially and environmentally active organizations.

South American Explorer:

A 64-page quarterly magazine with articles on adventure travel, scientific discovery, history, archaeology, mountaineering, native peoples, languages, anthropology, geology, and more.

Membership Services include:

Knowledgeable Staff: Our friendly staff and volunteers provide advice and practical information to members.

Networking: We assist members seeking travel companions for a trip/expedition, or seeking to contact experts in a particular field.

Trip Reports: Trip Reports provide specialized information on just about everything—climbing Aconcagua, volunteering, learning Spanish, lining up a local tour operator, white-water rafting, hiking the Darien Gap, visiting the Galapagos, etc.

Maps: The Club maintains a collection of topographical, geological and road maps for member use and purchase.

Lending Library: There is an extensive library of both English and Spanish books at Clubhouses in Quito and Lima.

Merchandise for sale: Books, maps, tapes, T-shirts and other items are on sale at Clubhouses or through the Club's catalog.

Trip planning: Members can call upon their Club for help and trip planning information.

Discounts: Members receive discounts from many local tour operators, hotels and language schools.

Additional Member Services at Quito, Lima, and Cusco Clubhouses:

Equipment Storage, Mail, Phone and Fax Service, Book Exchange Library, Message Board, E-mail Service.

South American Explorers Catalog:

The annual catalog contains books, maps, and language tapes. Please call or write the Ithaca office to request a copy of the latest catalog. Include $3.00 if catalog is to be mailed outside the U.S.

To join the SAE:

Contact us at our U.S. headquarters, use the order form on page 63, or sign up at one of the clubhouses.

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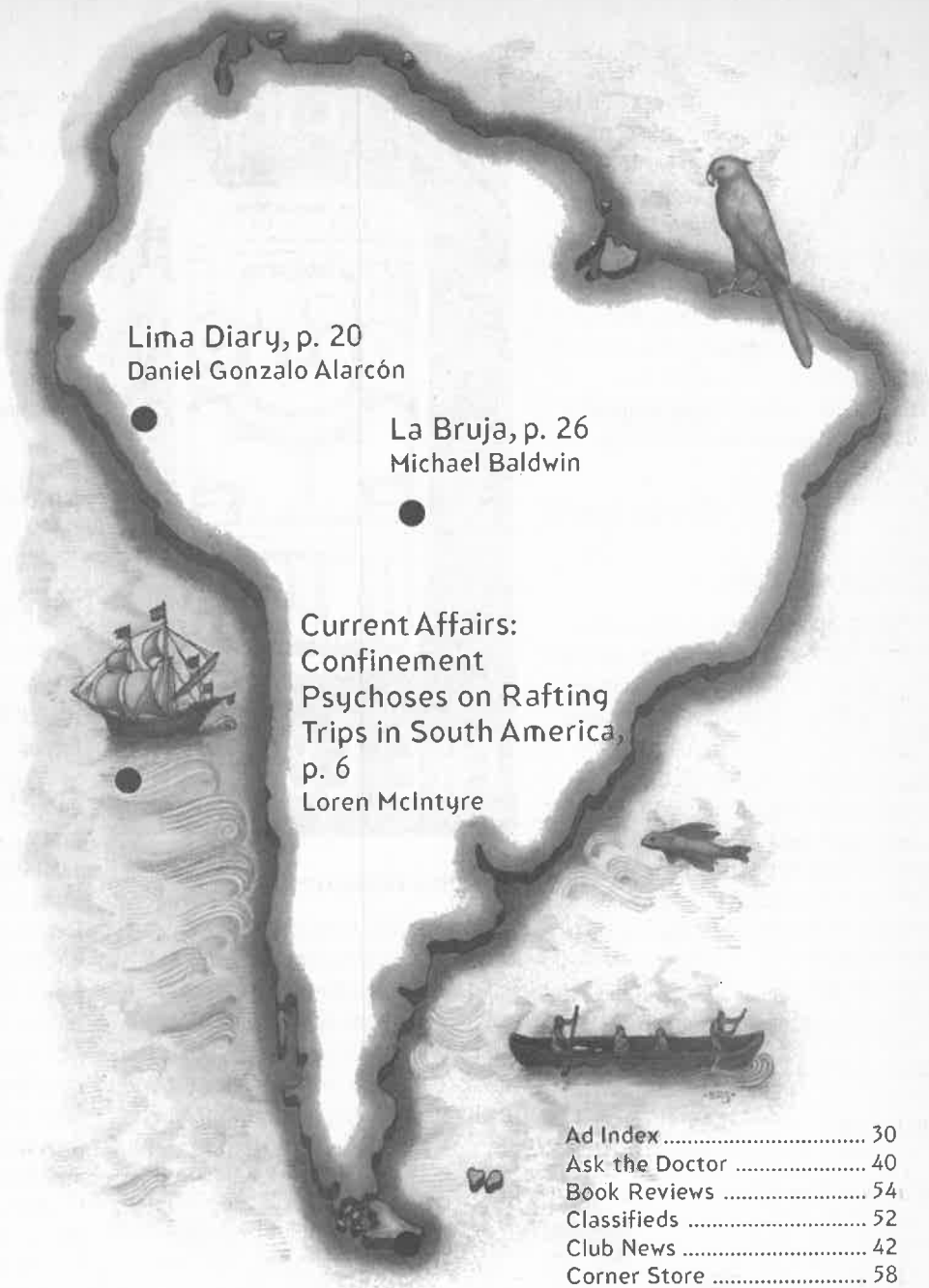

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Cover: Kantuta blossoms grace the sail of the Kantuta underway near Talara, Peru. Captain Eduard Ingris stands at the bow. Photograph courtesy of Loren McIntyre.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the editor:

.....Just keep up the good work and let members who would be "elitist" or "appearance-oriented" go try to join Explorers Club of New York, which certainly holds itself above the rest of us. Let them travel with Explorers Club Travelers, whose trips start at a week for as little as $6,000. For me, I remain a loyal and respectful member, who could in no way, on her own, purchase or find the many wonderful services I have access to through SAE.....

Connie Jaquith

To the editor:

Just received Issue 60. I have been a member longer than most and started back when the Florida Expeditionary Group actively climbed, kayaked, and explored all over South America. My advice on this business of the magazine format: to Hell with the spoiled snobs who want glossy! I look for content and interesting articles. I don't care if I read it on glossy or newspaper. Do what you need to do to stay in print.

Stay genuine and you will have my annual, meager membership fee.

John R. Smith

To the editor:

Just received Issue 60 of the *SA Explorer* and was surprised, but not offended, by the new format especially after reading the editors note starting on page three. Don and all, do what you feel to be in all of our best interest and maintain the organization's solvency and continued operation. We enjoy the publication and the bounty of information provided through your organization.

Gracias y que les vayan bien.

Joe Barnett & Emily Vaughn

To the editor:

Do not let form triumph over substance. When finances improve, do not revert to your magazine format. Rather, go monthly as a tabloid. Or perhaps as a web publication. In any event, keep publishing.

Martin Himmelfarb

To the editor:

Well, I'll weigh in as the spouse of a Life Member who collects all the *SAE* magazines: I hate the newspaper format.

That being said, I think you should do what *National Geographic* does: Take every back issue up to, say, Number 50, scan them, and burn them on to a CD. Then people could use both the new format and the old format to wrap fish, and they'd have more room on their bookshelves for materials from the SAE Corner Store.

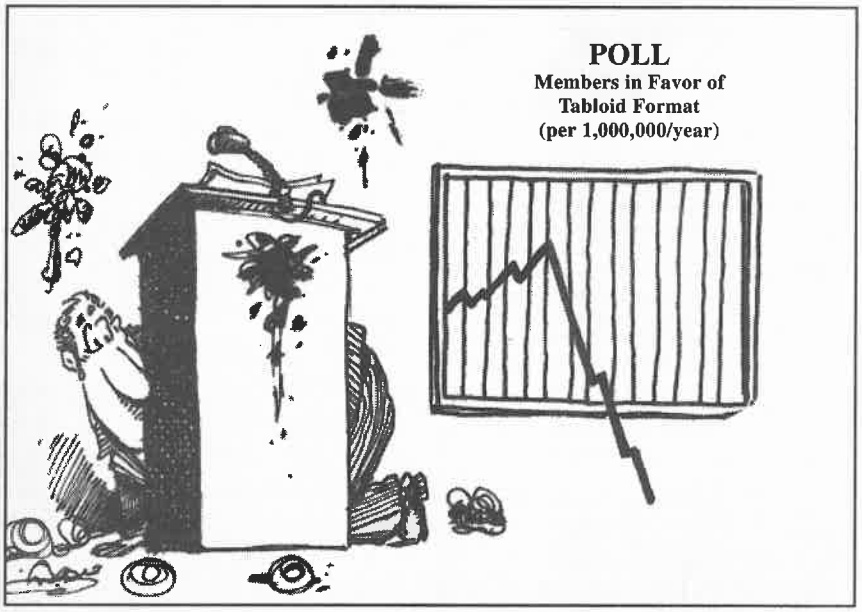
On the other hand, the customer is always right. Although members may keep renewing their dues (because the SAE is truly unique), if you refuse to address their complaints, they'll think you're snooty and probably won't love you as much.

In any event, hang in there. I need the escape that comes with every magazine. And, besides, if you fold, I'd have to resort to getting my escape literature from those swine at the Explorers Club.

Jake Henderson

To the editor:

I'm writing to express both disappointment and disgust with my fellow SAE members. I, too, was surprised to see that our familiar magazine had changed to a newspaper format. However, I



wasn't enraged to the point that I would threaten to cut my support to the SAE.

Maybe my point of view is somewhat skewed, since I volunteered at both the Quito and Cusco clubhouses. Still, the SAE was founded to further the exchange of information among travelers and researchers—not to provide members with nice-looking magazines that members can stack on their bookshelves. And, remember that we're still receiving the same amusing and informative articles, notes, and news on South America.

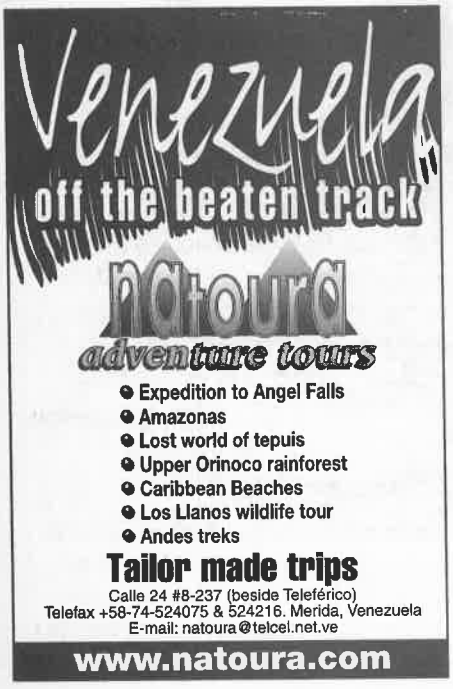
This one-of-a-kind non-profit is well worth the annual membership fee.

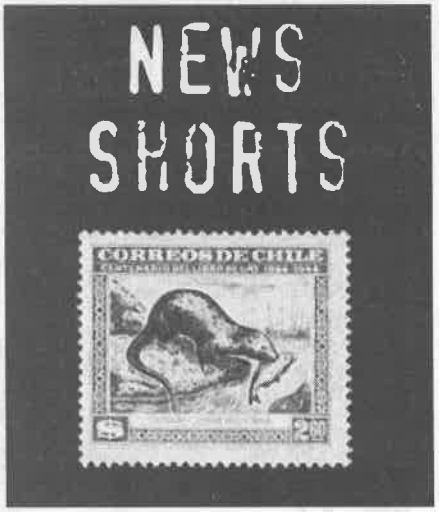
Seth Stewart

To the editor:

I'm guessing that Col. Fawcett & his buddies are in the Florida Everglades. (See "Gone But not Forgotten," Tips & Notes, Issue 60.)

Wayne Bates





Twitch and Shout

Is there life after death? Who can say? But there *may* be movement, according to Dr. Jose Bueri of the JM Ramos Mejia Hospital in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Bueri studied 38 cadavers over an 18 month period and recorded motor movements in almost half. Post-mortem jerks and twitches are a lot more common than suspected, the doctor notes. Such spasms can be very disturbing to the family of the deceased and may even cause veteran medical practitioners to doubt their conclusions.

Some of the movements reported by Dr. Bueri and his team occurred spontaneously. Others were caused by touch. In all cases, the movements did not involve any brain activity. Needless to say, any question about the death of a person can have serious practical and legal implications. It may also delay removal of organs for transplantation.

One of the most unsettling movements for members of the family, medical staff, and attendants is the Lazarus Sign. Referring to the biblical event of Lazarus rising from the dead, this is a series of movements that can last for a few seconds and occurs spontaneously or right after disconnection from a ventilator. Dr. Bueri describes the Lazarus sign as starting with an extension of the arms, followed by a crossing, or touching, of the arms over the chest, and finally a dropping of the arms alongside the torso. However unnerving this may be to those hovering around the departed, the doctor stresses that the Lazarus Sign is a spinal reflex— the movements originate in the spinal cord, not in the brain.

In all cases studied by Dr. Bueri, movement took place within the first 24 hours following the diagnosis of brain death. No movements were noted after 72 hours. Of course, any movement after 72 hours— the pinching of a nurse, say— would indicate the subject was very much alive.

Blow Pop

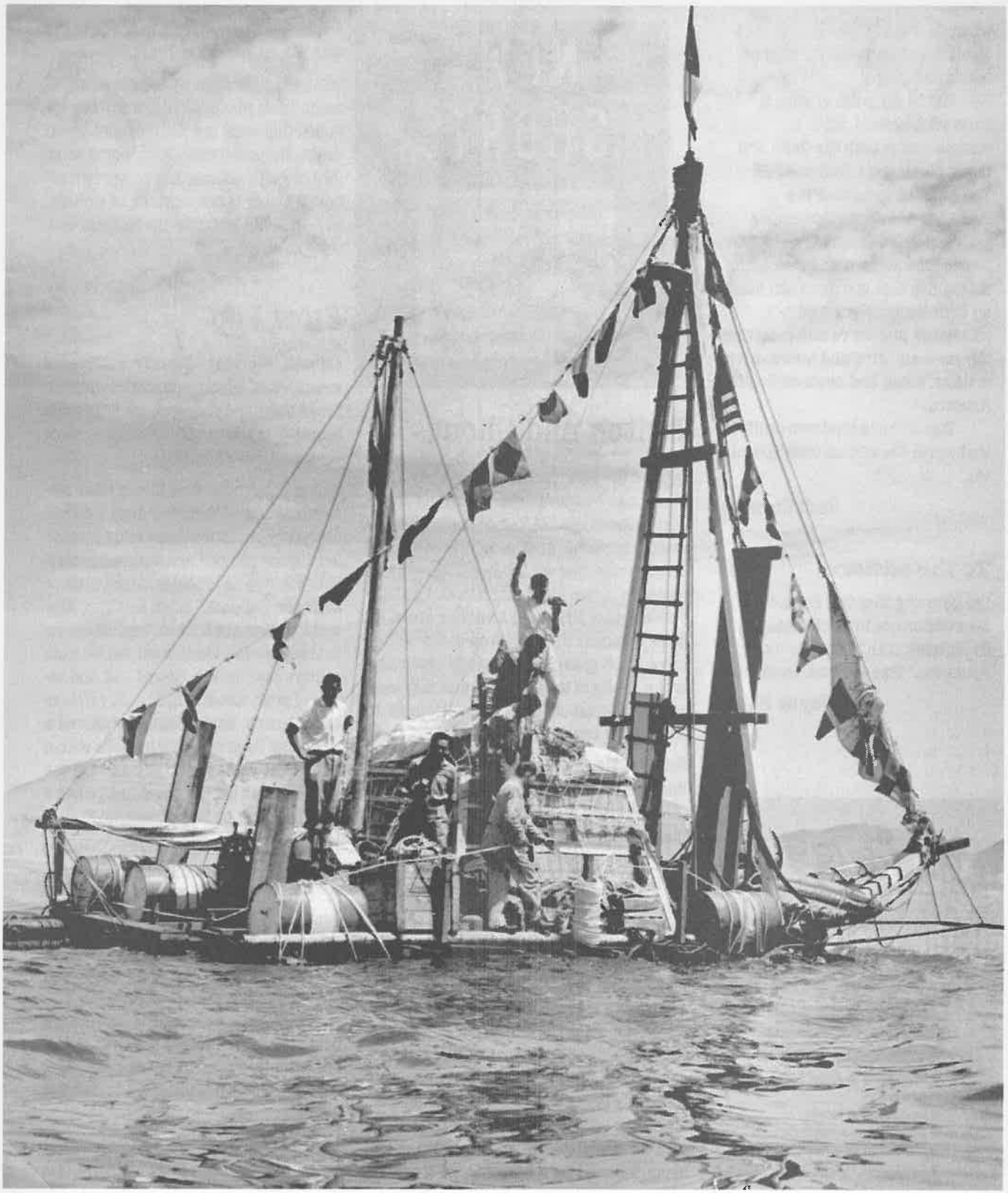
(Miami, Florida) Twenty uniformed members of Miami's narcotics division break down the door and, pushing aside startled mothers and children, seize several boxes of lollipops.

This may be the lead on future news stories now that Colombian drug traffickers have been found concealing cocaine in lollipops shipped to the United States. Police in Bogotá recently seized a box of 215 "Bon-Bon-Bum" lollies awaiting shipment to New York. Close inspection revealed that the traditional bubble gum centers had been hollowed out and replaced with uncut, high-quality Colombian cocaine. Each lollipop contained a whopping 21 grams of pure coke with a U.S. street value of $7,000. All told, the Bon-Bon-Bum lollipops contained a hefty 4.5 kilogram (10 lbs) of cocaine.

The seized lollipops originated in Medellin. Genuine Bon-Bon-Bum lollipops, on the other hand, are manufactured in Cali, Colombia and sold worldwide.

Cocaine lollipops are the latest twist in Colombia's imaginative campaign to sneak cocaine past U.S. customs officials. Over the years, drug traffickers have concealed the drug in flower stems, mixed it into cement fence posts, and combined it with plastics made into dog kennels.

Lovers of genuine Bon-Bon-Bom lollipops are alarmed by the desecration of one of the world's great confections and hope that the international drug cartels have not irreparably damaged a classic icon of sweet-lovers.



La Kantuta II, Eduard Ingri's second raft, reached Polynesia unlike his first attempt. (Swiss Foto Lima)

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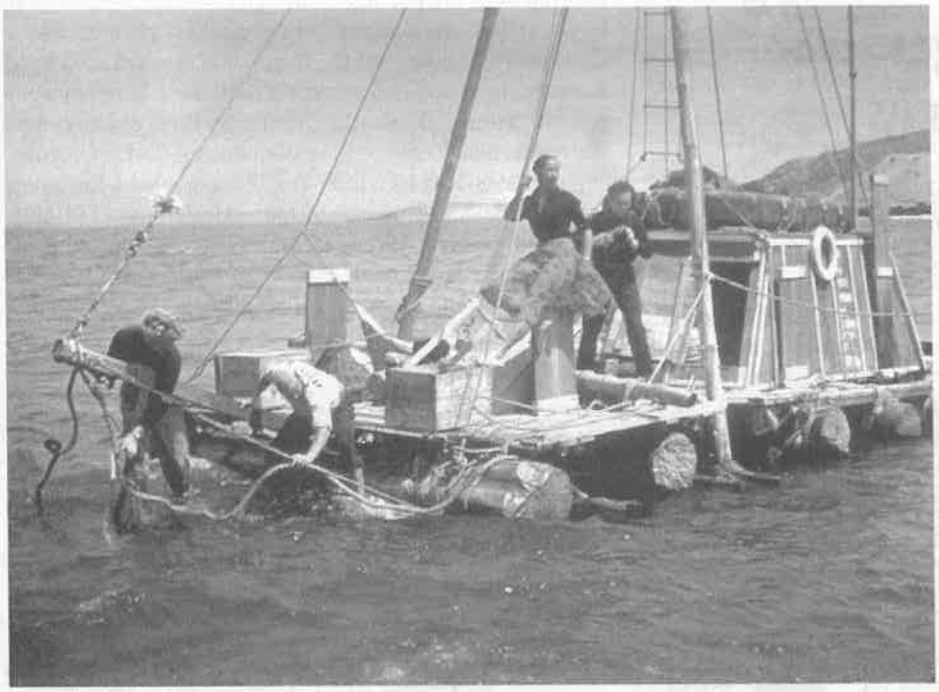
Loren McIntyre



Crew working at the bow of La Kantuta. (Loren McIntyre)

On nearly all the 16 raft voyages I know about, their captains had to deal with confinement psychoses.

Assigned to Peru as a U.S. Naval Mission advisor after World War II, Loren McIntyre came to know Thor Heyerdahl. Later, producing motion pictures and exploring the shores and islands of Lake Titicaca in his own boat, he met Kon-Tiki imitators bent on drifting across the South Pacific on rafts, oblivious to such needs as relieving themselves within sight of circling sharks. Captain McIntyre denies ever hankering for such intimacy with the deep. "Oh, in Seattle even before I could swim I used to dog-paddle a log two miles across Lake Washington. But after high school I shipped out. And shaped up fast when a typhoon near Japan nearly slammed the door of Davy Jones' locker on my ship—a steel habitat about a thousand times bigger than any bundle of tree trunks."

McIntyre's affair with the South American Explorer *began with the first issue, October 1977. The magazine's report that "Pantiacolla Dots" discovered on a satellite photograph of Peru might be Inca pyramids led* National Geographic *to send the author of their book* The Incredible Incas *to verify them. In seven hours of aerial photography McIntyre found only an array of natural landslides. In time, his letters, articles, and his column "Magnum Bunkum" elevated his name to our magazine's masthead—a more sublime attainment, he concedes, than simply cashing* National Geographic *checks for his two dozen South American assignments.*

With a three-year mission to Mars scheduled for the year 2020, NASA flight surgeon Chris Flynn, chief of psychiatry at the Johnson Space Center, is trying to determine how astronauts might handle the stress of confinement during the longest voyages ever—six months each way.

Dr. Flynn ought to take a look at participants in similar voyages: crews confined on rafts that sailed—mainly from South America—into the vast reaches of the world's oceans between 1947 and 1978. Unlike astronauts journeying through space devoid of life, the seamen—and in one case, a woman—lived with their noses only inches above a maritime environment pulsing with life and sometimes terror.

1955. At the end of the second month at sea, Andy Rost climbed to the masthead and stayed there night and day. It was the only way he could get away from the crowd—the four other people on a 12x21-foot log raft, *La Kantuta,* adrift in the Pacific Ocean.

1958. On the 69th day, when the raft *Tahiti Nui II* with its crew of five had come within a thousand miles of the nearest South Sea island, Juan Bugueño began to build a one-man escape raft for himself. When opposed, he threatened the skipper with an axe.

1970. Staring with unseeing eyes, Normand Tetreault stopped eating and speaking aboard the raft *La Balsa* somewhere west of Galápagos. No one could get through to him until shipmates provoked his anger by pretending to drown his pet kitten. Normand snapped out of it.

On nearly all the 16 raft voyages I know about, their captains had to deal with confinement psychoses. One exception was their progenitor's *Kon-Tiki Expedition.* On Thor Heyerdahl's legendary voyage, the crew was unusually compatible. All were old comrades, all were Norwegians except Bengt Danielsson, a Swede. The Scandinavians enjoyed their heroic adventure and were easily amused—as when two of them observed *Kon-Tiki* from their rubber dinghy and found the view so hilarious that others took turns rowing out and laughing like lunatics at the "old Norwegian hay-loft full of sunburnt bearded ruffians" bobbing helplessly in mid-ocean. If they were ever upset about being cooped up for months, they never admitted it. Those six were made of the same right stuff as the seven original astronauts.

Heyerdahl got an early start–when 23–at sharing restricted living arrangements far from home. "To escape civilization, Liv and I marooned ourselves in 1937 on Fatu-Hiva, a Polynesian island visited only once a year by a small copra schooner. Few clothes, no medicines. Committed to living off the fruits of land and sea as long as our honeymoon might last. Or until the schooner might return." Thor and Liv were sitting by their dying campfire on the beach one evening with old Tei-Tetua, a former cannibal who had 12 wives. Tei-Tetua leveled a firebrand at dark swells rolling out of the east and breaking onto moonlit boulders. "From far out there, *Tiki* brought my ancestors to these islands. They carved the stone giants," he said, speaking of idols Thor and Liv had seen in Fatu-Hiva's forests. The monoliths looked like those of lost Andean civilizations.

Giant turtle soup was a welcomed dietary change for the crew of the Kantuta voyage from Peru to Polynesia. (Eduard Ingris)

Filling double roles as chronicler and nurse, Natalia Emperatriz Mazuelos was the lone female to grace the La Kantuta *voyage, and possibly the first woman to sail from Peru to Polynesia on a raft. (Loren McIntyre)*

How could early Americans have crossed 4,000 miles of open ocean? The search for ancient sea routes transformed Heyerdahl's entire life. He studied oceanography to understand the Humboldt Current—the popular name of the Peruvian Current that sweeps up the west coast of South America, then veers towards Polynesia. He learned about light-weight balsa-wood rafts steered by *guaras*, various adjustable centerboards. One such raft, loaded with trade goods, was captured in 1526 by the first explorers to sail the Peruvian coast.

they ate up the food supplies and spent on pisco all the funds raised by public subscription

Spanish chroniclers had written that Emperor Tupa Inca Yupanqui vowed not to curb his conquests until he reached the uttermost sea. Around 1460, Tupa first beheld the ocean near Manta, Ecuador, where the Creator, *Kon-Tiki Viracocha*, had bidden farewell to his people and set out across the Pacific by walking on the water. Sea merchants came on sailing rafts from far-off islands: Avachumbi and Ninachumbi. (*Chumbi* means "belt" in Quechua, suggesting atolls ringed by coral reefs.) Tupa Inca's court necromancer—said to possess the art of flying through the air—verified the islands' existence. Fascinated, the emperor built a great fleet of balsa-log rafts and ventured into the Pacific with an army of 20,000. After a year he returned with black people, gold, a metal chair, and the hide and jawbone of a horse. The sea story so excited Captain Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa, the Spanish viceroy's historian, that he set sail from Peru for the rumored isles in 1567. He missed the coral atolls, but his skipper sailed on to discover the Solomon Islands. "Too bad Sarmiento missed Mangareva," Thor Heyerdahl reflected in 1974 at our table in Virginia. "Until the 1800s its lagoon sheltered log rafts busy with inter-island trade."

After World War II, Thor resolved to prove his theory that wooden rafts could weather a 4,000-mile oceanic crossing by actually building and launching a balsa-log raft into the Humboldt Current. Old comrades dropped everything to fell balsa trees in Ecuador and assemble a log raft of aboriginal design in Callao, Peru. On 29 April

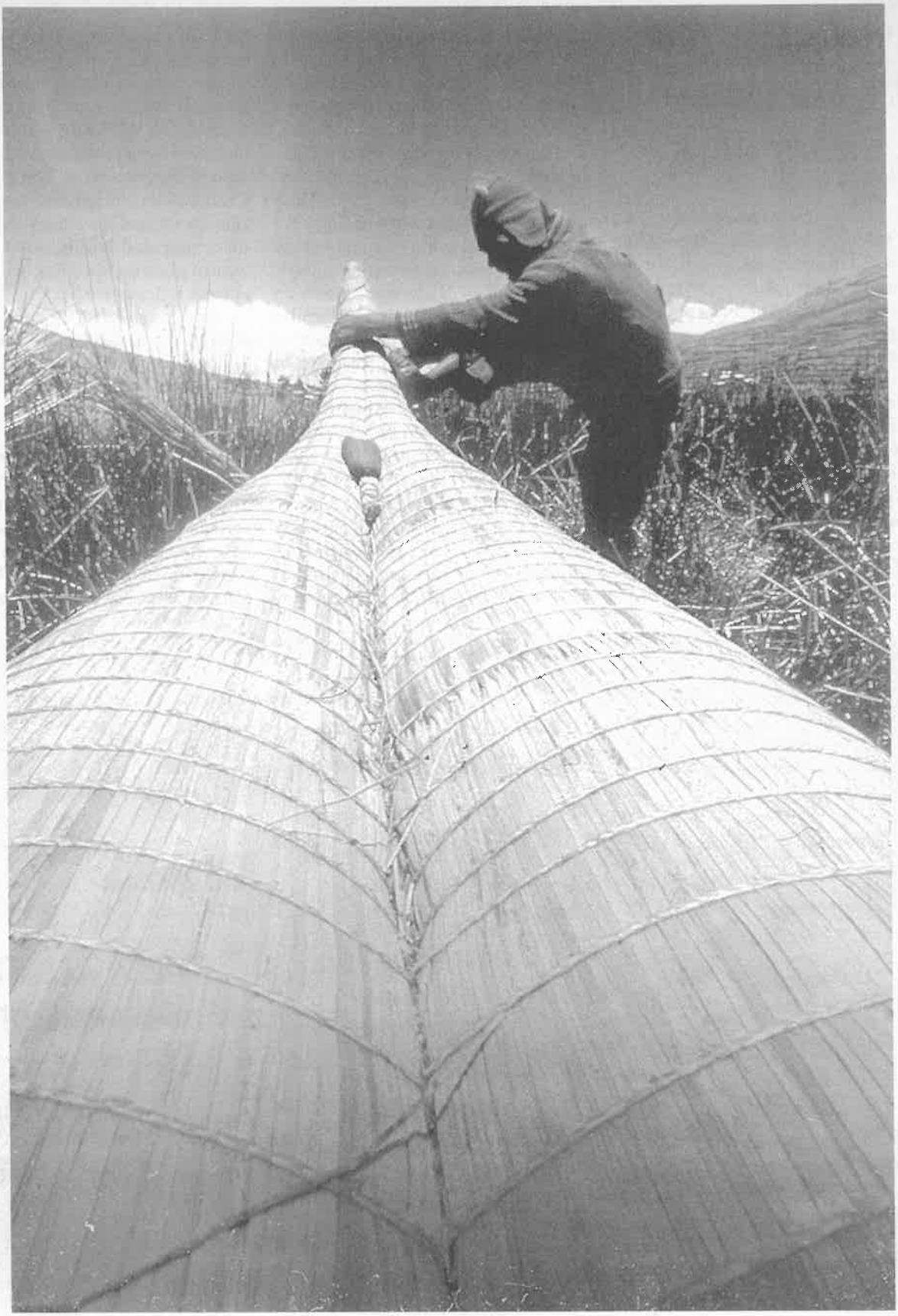
At the wheel of The Seven Little Sisters, William Willis allows the son of the author, Lance McIntyre, to give it a whirl. (Loren McIntyre)

1947 they sailed for Polynesia on the 40-foot *Kon-Tiki*. In May, June, and July, Peruvian naval officers and I gathered every day around a Pacific Ocean chart at the Escuela Naval in Callao where I served on the U. S. Naval Mission. We moved a little flag westward on the chart whenever a position report was radioed by the audacious vikings who had put to sea past our windows. When reception faltered we feared the flag might be marking a place in mid-ocean where *Kon-Tiki*'s logs and lashings had fallen apart. On the 101st day Heyerdahl confounded the skeptics. Breakers cast the raft onto a reef of Raroia atoll in the Tuamotu Archipelago 4,300 nautical miles from Callao, after a voyage so fabulous that the *Kon-Tiki* story soon became available in 64 languages.

In 1954 Thor and his second wife, Yvonne, came to Lima where I was producing films. I'll always regret being too busy to shoot motion pictures for him on a six-month voyage to Easter Island. Thor wondered how well totora reed boats—also known as balsas—might ride the Humboldt Current. He ordered two enormous balsas to be fashioned in Lake Titicaca. Carried by rail and steamship to Callao, the reed boats were launched into salt water in February, 1955. Thor hired me to report on the testing of their seaworthiness by two *Chalacos* (citizens of Callao), Julio Orjeda and Wilfredo Castro. Although both yearned for escape to the South Seas (one had three wives; the other lived with several spinster sisters) they ate up the food supplies and spent on pisco all the funds raised by public subscription. In Callao's contaminated harbor the big totora balsas rotted away in six months. Meanwhile, the Callao port captain refused to authorize the departure of one giant raft of inflated inner tubes and another buoyed by flour sacks full of ping-pong balls.

In a conclusion worthy of NASA's attention Thor Heyerdahl once wrote, "The most insidious danger on any expedition where men have to rub elbows for weeks is a mental sickness that might be called 'expedition fever'—a psychological condition that makes even the most peaceful person irritable, angry, furious, absolutely desperate, because his perceptive capacity gradually shrinks until he sees only his companions' faults while their good qualities are no longer recorded by his gray matter. The first duty of an expedition leader at any time is to be on guard against this lurking menace." (We called it "cabin fever" during World War II where larger crews were involved in far more boring yet far more dangerous cruises)

a crew from seven nations "stuck together like seven-headed Siamese septuplets, speaking seven languages"



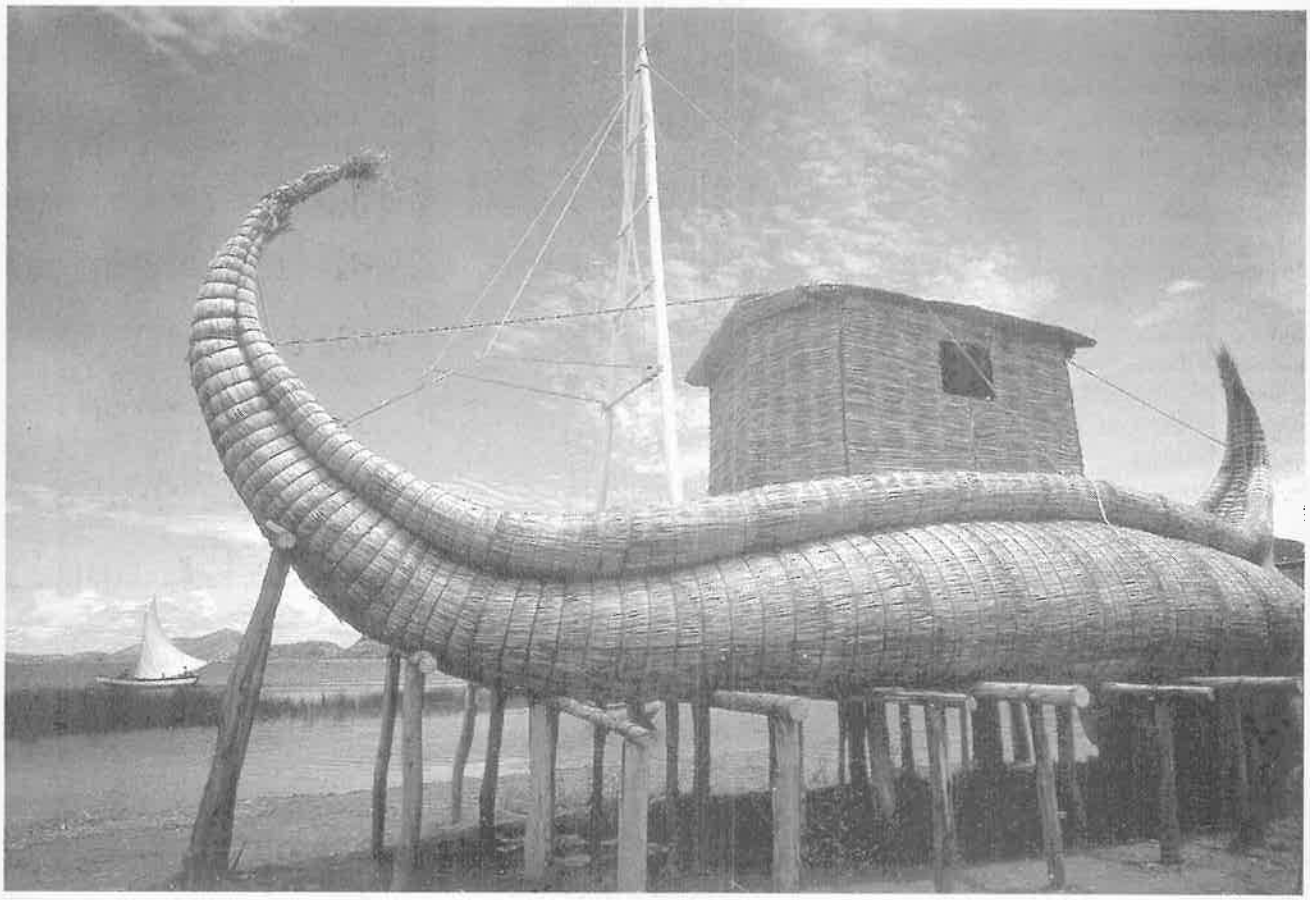
The RA*, Heyerdahl's papyrus reed-raft that disintegrated in the West Indies, has a similar structure to this vessel being built by Aymara craftsmen on Surique Island. (Loren McIntyre)*

a giant squid surfaced after dark

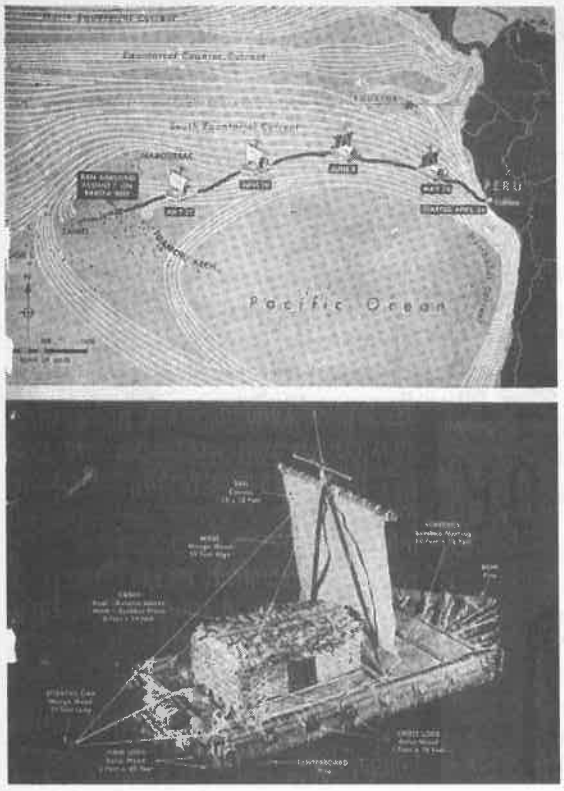
Twenty-two years after *Kon-Tiki*, Heyerdahl's leadership was put to the test. He launched *RA*, named for the sun god, a huge papyrus-reed raft built under the shadow of the pyramids by experts from Chad. He invited the onset of expedition fever by trying to cross the Atlantic Ocean with a crew from seven nations "stuck together like seven-headed Siamese septuplets, speaking seven languages." The papyrus expert from Chad, a devoted Moslem, could neither read nor write. The navigator, a Jew, was a US Naval Reserve commander and New York building contractor. The underwater expert, a 6-ft-5 judo champion of Egypt, was "an incorrigible playboy." The doctor was a Russian born in Mongolia who had spent a year at the South Pole. The Italian photographer had scaled mountains on all continents. The quartermaster was a Mexican professor of anthropology. Thor, the Norwegian captain, was a low-key polymath. They lived day and night in a wickerwork cabin without elbow room or privacy, complicating a major requirement of leadership: Praise in Public, Censure in Private. On the third day out the meticulous Italian raged at the messy Egyptian who was used to having a nanny pick up after him. Thor found a quiet place to explain teamwork: there is no room for one's "own affairs" on board. Days later the black African refused to take his turn scrubbing pots because it was slave labor—until he saw Heyerdahl scrubbing when his turn came. The Mexican was an artful dodger. The Russian did nothing until ordered. While the American and the Italian were gung-ho for work, others resented their refusal to take it easy. A tape recorder played the same pop tunes ad nauseam until it got kicked overboard—accidently. Quarrels were provoked by radio reports of war in the eastern Mediterranean. The man from Chad was bewildered because the Russian doctor and the American navigator represented hostile countries that wanted peace and therefore helped Vietnamese kill one another.

The crew held together during eight weeks at sea but the "paper boat" fell apart short of the West Indies. All hands were rescued by a yacht from Barbados.

The following year, 1970, Thor brought to Morocco four Aymara Indians from Surique Island in Lake Titicaca to build *RA II* of papyrus. The crew was the same as before plus a Japanese cinematographer. A desk clerk from Morocco replaced the Moslem from Chad whose wives in three Afri-



Thor Heyerdahl recruited four Aymara Indians to construct this model of the RA II *in Morocco after the demise of its predessesor, the* RA. *(Loren McIntyre)*



The 40-foot Kon-Tiki.

can countries needed his attention. *RA II* weathered minor animosities and heavy storms for 3270 nautical miles to reach Barbados in 57 days.

In 1977 Heyerdahl again hired Paulino Esteben and his fellow craftsmen from Lake Titicaca. In Iraq's legendary "Garden of Eden" the Bolivians built a reed boat like those of the ancient Sumerians, the *Tigris*. Once more Thor enlisted an international crew, including a nucleus of three old friends from his earlier voyages on "floating haystacks." Flying a United Nations flag, 11 rafters sailed 4,200 miles of ancient sea routes around Arabia. They escaped expedition fever by frequent stops for shore excursions to archeological sites. After 144 days afloat, Arab states denied them entrance to the Red Sea for reasons of "war zone security." In protest, Thor lowered the United Nations flag off Djibouti and set fire to the *Tigris*.

Expedition fever would not jeopardize the long Martian voyage if only a single astronaut or cosmonaut were aboard. (Of course that could happen only on the return trip in the event of a catastrophic loss of the rest of the crew.) How might a lone voyager behave? Joshua Slocum, the first man to sail around the world alone, 1895 to 1898, eased his solitude and exercised his vocal cords by talking to his non-existent helmsman. At midday he would announce aloud "Eight bells!" Whenever the full moon rose out of the sea he said to the man therein, "Good evening, sir. I'm glad to see you." Slocum was in his mid-fifties.

A man I once knew, William Willis, wrote books about the joys and hazards of solitary voyaging. He sailed alone from Callao bound for Samoa on 22 June 1954. Since he was 61, just one sinewy old man steering a bundle of logs, Lima's *El Comercio* asserted "*Si Mister Willis llega será con la suerte que Dios concede a los ilusos.*" (If Willis arrives it will be with the luck that God grants pipe-dreamers.) Willis had named his raft *The Seven Little Sisters* for the constellation Pleiades, each of its seven main logs a daughter of Atlas. He'd cut the logs in Ecuador and built a raft smaller but more rigid than Heyerdahl's, with no intention of conforming to aboriginal design. He shipped it to the same naval shipyard in Peru that helped assemble *Kon-Tiki*. Hardwood braces bolted across the logs would keep them from flexing in the waves. A centerboard 18 feet deep could be lowered and hoisted by one man with block and tackle. A large steel rudder, chain-driven by a conventional ship's wheel, would help Willis stay on course and thus avoid the *Kon-Tiki*'s nightmare: trying to steer with a long stern sweep that proved unmanageable in a storm.

For a month, Willis collected autographs on his cabin walls, welcoming Boy Scouts, diplomats, *Kon-Tiki* veteran Herman Watzinger, and fishermen who warned of perils such as giant squid that surfaced after dark. At our house for dinner with his wife Teddy, Bill Willis told of his boyhood in Hamburg and sailing in square riggers at age 15, twice around the Horn. He jumped ship in Galveston in 1912 to wrestle for money, pan for gold in Alaska, and help a Devil's Island *libéré* escape to Brazil. After marrying Teddy in 1938, Bill shipped out on tankers and wrote poetry. "In Virgin Gorda we bought an inter-island sloop. We nearly sank in a hurricane, as seasick as Lord Nelson off Toulon. Alone, I'll show what kind of men used to inhabit the earth. Alone, I'll turn my experience into pure gold." Teddy tried to rein him in. "Bill needs to save his secrets for his books and films. Plagiarists will try to get a jump on us. Even worse are the celluloid pirates. They'll shoot films to sell to newsreel producers. That's why we don't let visitors take more than two movie shots."

When a Peruvian minesweeper towed Atlas's seven daughters out into the Humboldt Current, small boats swarmed around the raft. Bill made sure no celluloid pirates could steal closeups of the *Navigante Solitario* at sea: over his head and shoulders he wore a gunnysack pierced with eye holes like a KKK hood.

over his head he wore a gunnysack pierced with eye holes like a KKK hood

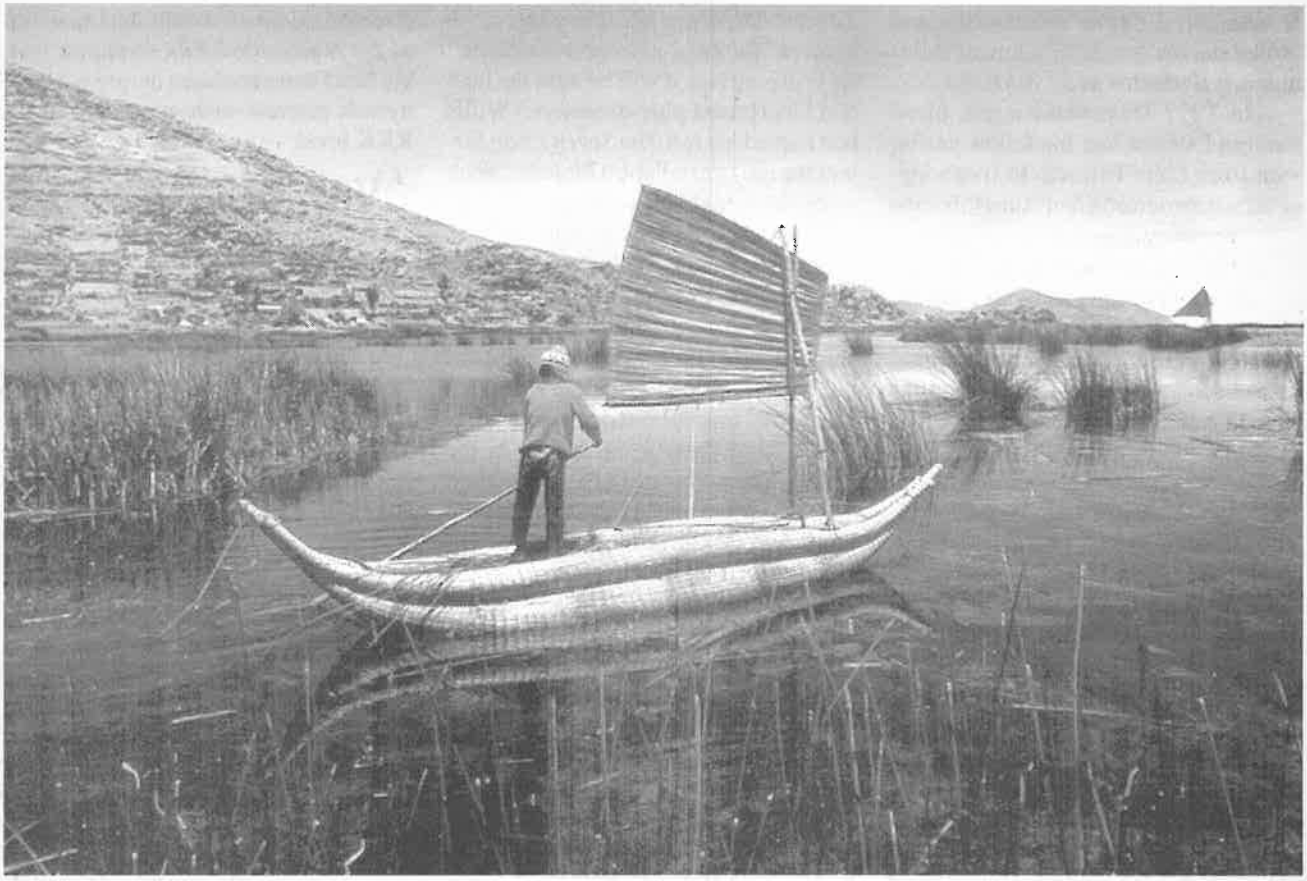
At sea, handling the raft kept him busy, short on sleep, but free of hassles. Although he longed for Teddy, he loved the solitude. "What a glorious feeling to be alone in the universe! What humbleness it begets, what resignation! What strength of spirit! What hope to purge oneself of a thousand stains!" When solitude became too overpowering he would burst into song. The sea hermit had a couple of close calls. Once

a pain in the solar plexis was so awful he considered performing surgery on himself

he slipped overboard and barely snagged a trailing shark-fishing line. Later, a pain in the solar plexis was so awful he considered performing surgery on himself. And his gut kept popping out of an old abdominal rupture. After four months of radio silence Willis made contact and was towed the final miles into Pago Pago. *El Comercio* for 15 October 1954 was jammed with dispatches from Samoa announcing the arrival of "*El Quijote del Mar.*" He had sailed 6,700 miles, 1,400 more than *Kon-Tiki*.

Nine years afterwards, on 4 July 1963, William Willis, now white of hair, sailed alone once more from Callao—this time for Australia. His new sailing raft, *Age Unlimited*, built of steel in New York, had been shipped to Peru. His purpose was to "defy old age, which has been getting me down of late." At sea, the ancient mariner drank a daily cup of seawater "to keep healthy." (Heyerdahl had claimed that a few gulps a day replaced salt lost to perspiration and cut back on thirst.) However, his abdominal rupture forced Willis to break the voyage in Samoa in November. He flew to New York for an operation, then sailed again in June, observing his 71st birthday in August, 1964, with his usual ration of seawater and a raw fish. "The drinking of seawater is a sacrament." Adroit maneuvering saved him from shipwreck on one South Sea island after another. Finally, *Age Unlimited*'s steel pontoons pounded onto and over Australia's Great Barrier Reef on 9 September 1964, having zigzagged 11,000 miles in 204 days at sea. *El Viejo del Mar* walked ashore near Tulley, Queensland, clad in little more than his shriveled skin and long white beard. At the police station, one officer suspected Bill was an escaped convict from the Norfolk Penal Colony, shut down in the 1850s.

According to a Tass News Agency release for September 30, 1968, William Willis sailed unaided once too often. Tass quoted the captain of a Soviet trawler that hoisted aboard a boat with a broken mast found drifting in the Atlantic 330 miles west of Ireland: "We found a passport, a logbook, a notebook, calling cards, and unmailed letters, as well as a little money, three cans of cereal and flour, and empty water cans. The last date crossed off a calendar was July 20, 1968." Bill was almost 75, a



An Aymara boatsman tests a papyrus raft in calm water before setting sail. (Loren McIntyre)

decade older than Joshua Slocum when that first lone circumnavigator disappeared at sea in 1909.

How many women—if any—might go along on the voyage to Mars in 2020 will be a tough call for NASA and a field day for tabloid journalists. My good friend Eduard Ingris set the pace for rafters in 1955 when he picked the crew for his balsa wood raft *La Kantuta*, named after the Incas' sacred flower. For his chronicler and nurse he chose Natalia Emperatriz Mazuelos, 29, a convent-bred Indian maiden from Amantani Island, Lake Titicaca.

Ingris hoped to make the first color film of a Humboldt Current voyage to Polynesia. A composer of songs, films scores, and operettas, Eduard was born 1905 in Zlonice, Bohemia (now the Czech Republic). He and I had first worked together in 1952 in the Andes and Amazonia on a film starring Pilar Pallette before she married John Wayne. My wife Sue remembers meeting Eduard in Lima. He came out of his photography darkroom wearing only pajama pants. Ever courtly, Eduard clicked his bare heels and bent to kiss the lady's hand. Eduard had a heart so soft and a soul so romantic I couldn't imagine his becoming captain of a transpacific crew. Besides Natalia, his supply officer, Joaquin Guerrero, 34, was an Argentine seeker of endurance records by auto, bicycle, foot—and now by raft. The radioman, Czech engineer Mirko Gurecky, 29 (who functioned as the all-around handyman essential to all raft and space voyages) went along to compensate for his friend Ingris's lack of practicality. Dutch sailor-of-fortune Andy Rost, 26, had sailed under 8 flags in stewards' departments. After living a week with the crew in Talara, in northern Peru, I gave Andy the highest marks for survivability on the high seas. (I was dead wrong). Needing a navigator, Eduard invited me along. "No, thanks," I answered. "Not until I can go there as Tupa Inca's court necromancer did: by flying through the air."

La Kantuta sailed from Talara on 4 December. Eduard lolled in a hammock with his guitar, dreaming up the score of his film-to-be. The task of learning how to rig the sails and the *guaras*—the Inca-style centerboards used for steering—fell to his polyglot crew. For a few days the men shaved "to show respect for Natalia." That soon became too painful with salt water. Yet their respect for the novitiate never lessened during three months afloat. Having shoved off too far north to catch the Current, *La Kantuta* drifted into a penal colony in the Galapagos; then got becalmed in the equatorial doldrums and meandered helplessly week after week. It had been captured by a gyre, the 600-mile-wide vortex between Galapagos and Panama. The radio failed. Andy Rost began hallucinating, begging Eduard to shoot him to avoid the horror of being eaten by sharks. Then Andy climbed the mast "to avoid the crowd." On the 97th day, the argonauts were rescued by a US naval vessel on its way home from Antarctica—at a cost to taxpayers of $75,000.

the Czech was sprinkling his food with glass from crushed ampules

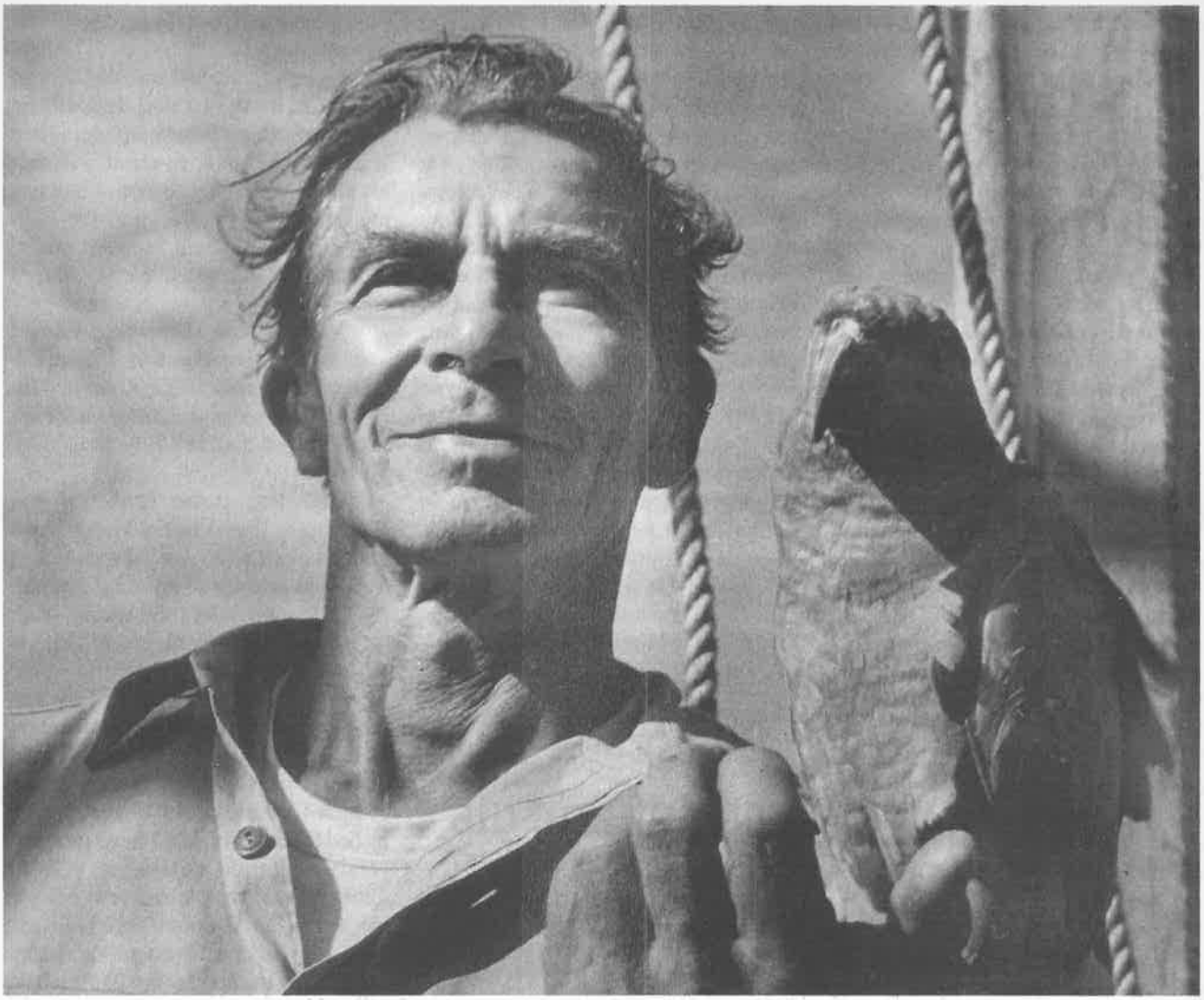
It took Eduard Ingris three years to build and launch *La Kantuta II*. He left Callao on 12 April 1959. Besides Joaquin Guerrero from the first voyage, he took along two new recruits—a Czech and a Chilean. The four voyagers soon split into hostile pairs. Joaquin warned Eduard that the Czech was sprinkling his food with glass from crushed ampules. When the raft reached the Tuamotu Archipelago and raised Napuka on the horizon, the recruits offered to bring fresh water from the island. They skimmed ashore in an outboard-powered life raft and reported themselves as sole survivors of *La Kantuta II*. Dismayed by the radio reports of Eduard's demise, my younger son rained tears all over his Ingris scrapbook.

Eduard and Joaquin sailed on. Four months and 6,000 miles out of Callao, *La Kantuta II* washed onto the reef of Matahiva, north of Tahiti. Eduard and Joaquin became beachcombers. They feasted on coconuts. Eventually islanders found them and their pet monkey and parrot. They showered the castaways and their small zoo with music, dance, and garlands, while Eduard filmed.

Years later, as a US citizen, Eduard and his wife Tina toured the lecture circuit with three films: *La Kantuta, Untamed Amazon*, and *Sailing the South Seas*. Eduard died in 1991.

For the same reasons that NASA puts flights on hold when casualties occur, Callao port authorities had long held up the sailing of *La Kantuta II*. Their motivation: the recent death on a South Sea island reef of Eric de Bisschop, 68, whose raft they had cleared for departure from Callao. The renowned French mariner had fought on the water and in the air in both World Wars. A stint with the police in the French Concession of Shanghai furnished funds to build a Chinese junk and retain a police colleague, "Tati" Tatibouet, as a one-man crew. After a shipwreck on Formosa they built another junk to chart Pacific Ocean currents. They headed for the Philippines, New Guinea, and Galapagos. They were seized by Japanese in the Marshall Islands and sent away without food. Numb with hunger, they drifted ashore at the leper colony on Molokai. Upon recovery, they sailed a double-hulled Polynesian canoe from Hawaii to France via the Indian and Atlantic Oceans, arguing all the way. In Nice, Tati abandoned ship and Eric as well. He was tired, after five years, of Eric's paradoxical wanderings as if in search of an equatorial version of Ultima Thule.

Living in Tahiti, Bisschop believed Polynesians had been the greatest seafarers, sailing to Asia, Africa, and America and return. In November 1956 he left Tahiti with a crew of four and a sow, Chanchita. *Tahiti Nui*, his sailing raft, was built entirely of large bamboo poles. Eric meant to steer a chilly south-



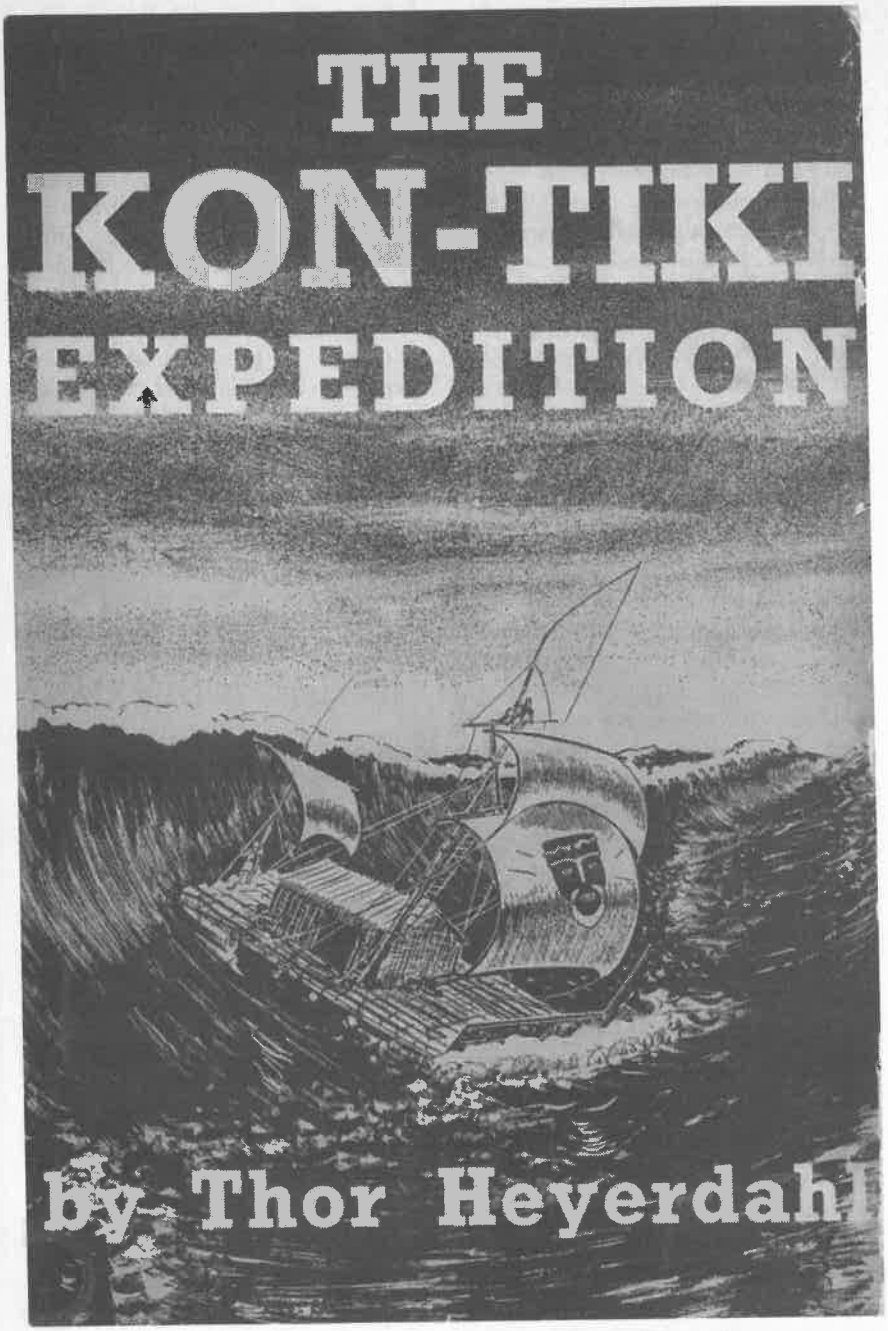
William Willis at sea, accompanied by Ike the parrot. (Eduard Ingris)

ern course below the "Roaring Forties," catch the Humboldt Current off Chile, ride it north to Peru, and then curve back west to Tahiti—a circular round-trip. But in May 1957 *Tahiti Nui* broke up in a storm near Juan Fernandez (Robinson Crusoe) Island, 400 miles short of South America. An SOS, embellished by imaginative radio reports of an attack by a giant squid, brought a Chilean warship to the rescue.

Bisschop adjourned to an Andean retreat to write an emotional account of his voyage and those of early islanders (*Cap al Est*). In Constitucíon, Chile, his French second-in-command, Alain Brun, built *Tahiti Nui II* of three layers of cypress logs. In January 1958 Bisschop and his crew of two Frenchmen and two Chileans rode the Humboldt Current 2,000 miles up the coast to Callao. Eduard Ingris begged Eric to let him join the final leg of the round trip to Tahiti. But there was no room for the cheerful Czech in a 10-by-13 foot cabin of *Tahiti Nui II.* Eric began his last cruise on April 13th.

Halfway to Tahiti under continuously rainless skies, fresh water rations had to be cut to two cups a day, plus seawater. Eric fell ill with undiagnosed fever. Toredos (ship worms) honeycombed the cypress logs. The raft sank one foot, two feet, and then almost all three layers of cypress logs were awash. When wind filled the sail, it drove the bow of the raft underwater. When the raft rolled in heavy seas the crew had to rush to the high side to keep it from capsizing. They built an outrigger to reduce rolling. Waves doused their radios and sleeping bags. Unfortunately the buoyant sense of humor of Hans Fischer, one of the Chileans, was not very contagious. On the 88th day, Juan Bugueño, the Chilean cook, refused to

He steered so negligently that waves broke on board. Everyone cursed him.



A British edition of Thor Heyerdahl's bestseller The Kon-Tiki Expedition, *published in 68 languages.*

cook. He insisted on a ration of honey as large as that served Eric for his illness. He steered so negligently that waves broke on board. Everyone cursed him. Seething, Juanito began to build a tiny escape raft. When opposed, he brandished an axe. Just in time a sudden rainstorm quenched his insolence. All hands drank deeply and let the rain rinse itchy salt crust from their bodies and clothes.

Bisschop, weakening, surrendered command to Alain Brun. The raft drifted past island after island. The deck was awash; everyone lived on the flat cabin roof. At the end of the 6th month, they built an escape raft of spars and empty tanks, with a big box to hold their failing commander—even though Eric wanted to go down with his ship. They named the makeshift life raft *Tahiti Nui III.* For two weeks they sailed toward Samoa, "bickering ceaselessly over the most absurd things." Some wanted to divide up all the food and water. From his bed, Eric advised Alain quite audibly to "give all rebellious crewmen a good thrashing, or chuck them overboard." Then he prayed for a quick end. The end came under a full moon on August 29th. Roaring breakers flipped the little raft upside down upon the reef of Rakahanga Island in the Cook group. The crew survived but their captain had never learned how to swim. Eric de Bisschop's remains were transferred to Mangareva—the island that had sheltered sailing rafts in centuries past.

"give all rebellious crewmen a good thrashing, or chuck them overboard."

Both Willis and Ingris had welcomed food donations from Carlos Caravedo Arca, a Peruvian farmer "bewitched by the sea" all his life. After Willis's second voyage, Carlos built a balsa raft, the *Tangaroa*, of eight logs brought from Ecuador. Two countrymen joined him. Carlos told me "It was time to prove that Peruvians are just as daring as foreigners." And just as argumentative? Carlos says no; the adage "Two's company, three's a crowd," was not the case on *Tangaroa.* They left Callao on 26 July 1965. After 105 days afloat, they landed at Fakarava, the most distant island of the Tuamotu group. Carlos, now 79, has "just about finished" writing a book about his voyage.

In Santander, Spain, Vital Alsar Ramirez was only 14 years old when *Kon-Tiki* made headlines. Of all the admirers and imitators of Thor Heyerdahl, Alsar became the most accomplished—after a bad beginning. His first log raft,

La Pacifica, sailed from Guayaquil for Australia in October 1966. Alsar quickly learned that close quarters bring about showdowns as dangerous as rogue waves. Three days out of port one man became so frightened of sharks and possible hurricanes that he stayed in the cabin unable to sleep. Alsar transferred him to a passing steamship. *La Pacifica* got sucked into the same doldrums west of Panama that had captured *La Kantuta* on Ingris's first voyage. Alsar and his shipmates circled in the gyre week after week while teredos riddled the logs and *La Pacifica* lost buoyancy. On its 143rd and final day, a German ship rescued the crew from the cabin roof just as the raft began a slow descent to the ocean floor 8,000 feet below.

For Vital Alsar, the sea was like one's first love, soft and sweet, stormy and turbulent, forever unfathomable. He could not stay away. He built another raft in Guayaquil while "wondering how four *machos* could live together six months in a cramped floating prison cell without going stir crazy. Wasn't it Gide who said there is a potential murderer in all of us? With luck the men's neuroses will complement one another: introverts and extroverts, optimists and pessimists, romanticists and realists, conservatives and liberals—a mixed bag of strengths and weaknesses."

Snoring was annoying, as was the stench of cats and four men in the sweltering cabin

The new raft, *La Balsa*, sailed on 29 May 1970. This time Vital steered skillfully with traditional *guara* centerboards, nine 2-by-8-foot keel boards, vertically adjustable. He laid two rules on his old shipmates: never touch one another in any way; never speak ill of one another despite vexing personal quirks. Snoring was annoying, as was the stench of cats and four men in the sweltering cabin—especially for Vital who had a cleanliness mania. Gabriel Salas's spoon was the worst. "With every bite he would crunch his teeth into the base of the spoon—craack!—then scrape the food off with his upper front teeth, rassp, like a shovel on bare cement. Craack—rassp—craack—rassp all through every meal. When my nerves reached the breaking point I would sneak off to my retreat." Each man had reserved a space secure from trespass—be it a corner of the cabin or the port side aft—in which to brood, cool off about grievances, and, in darkness, accommodate erotic fantasies. They began to receive ham radio messages from Chile, from Liliana, HC2IS, who confessed, "I forget everything for you men on *La Balsa*. My husband, my children. I live now only for the raft." "She talks like music," said Marc Modena. "She's slender, tall, and brunette." "Nonsense" protested Gabriel. "She's short with gray-green eyes and heavy lips." "Ooh boy" said the usually noncommital Normand Tetreault. Vital envisioned Liliana as wise and enormously sensual.

To become as one with the sea—and to survive if they ran short of fresh water and the rains failed—all four shipmates drank sea water mixed with fresh in a ratio of one-to-five. Alsar was ill for months with psittacosis and all their pets died of the disease except Minet, a kitten that swam back to the raft whenever she was washed away. When furious storms lashed the raft Alsar shook his fist at the heavens and cursed Chisco, his favorite saint, San Francisco. Deluges failed to drown a plague of cockroaches and ants, stowaways from Guayaquil. But at least the waters from air and sea brought nourishment and cleansed the deck—benefits that astronauts could never derive from the near-vacuum of space.

One misery shared by both rafters and astronauts is nausea. Almost all of them get violently sick early in their voyages. Space travelers can't count on waves to rinse the floor. If they miss the barf bag they have to sponge vomit from the surrounding air. Weightlessness is so destructive of the human body that the Mars craft may have to rotate so that centrifugal force at its extremities creates the equivalent of earth gravity. Alsar was troubled by the deterioration of both his raft and the humans thereon. A doctor had told him that bodily disintegration increases at a geometrical (1,2,4,8,16,32, etc.) rather then a numerical progression. He wondered—in the night, when things always seemed worst—if similar decay applied to the raft.

Alsar was ill for months with psittacosis and all their pets died of the disease except Minet, a kitten that swam back to the raft whenever she was washed away.

Yet, navigating with unusual accuracy, the four voyagers and their aquatic kitten landed at euphoniously named Mooloolaba, Australia, on 5 November 1970. They had sailed 8,600 miles in 161 non-stop days, a Humboldt Current record. After arousing a public outcry to save Minet from euthanasia by health authorities, and following a "hero's tour" of cities, they had an alcoholic

farewell party on the raft. Many warm *abrazos* made up for those forbidden on the voyage. They all recalled how Gabriel's craacking and rassping with his spoon drove them out of the cabin at mealtimes. Then Gabriel confessed to Vital Asar, "It wasn't easy to obey your order never to touch a compañero. I wanted to punch your mouth every time you cleared your throat. One afternoon—sometime in August—you cleared your throat 29 times in a single hour! I counted them."

Not quite enough to kill.

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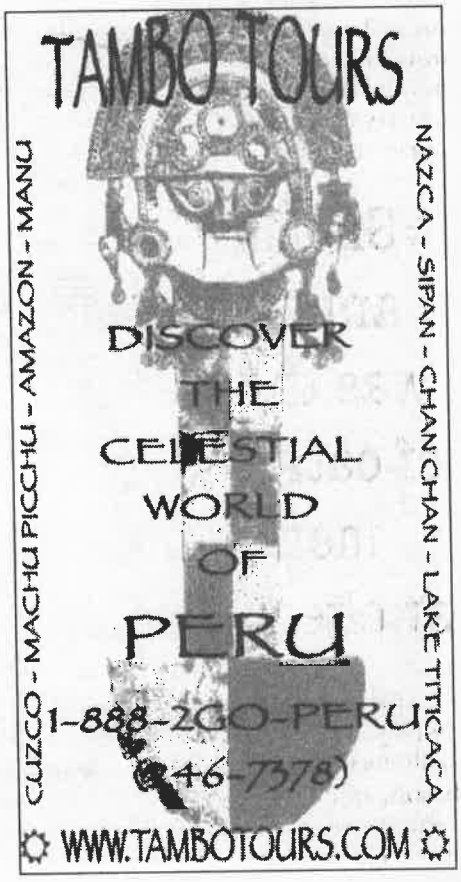
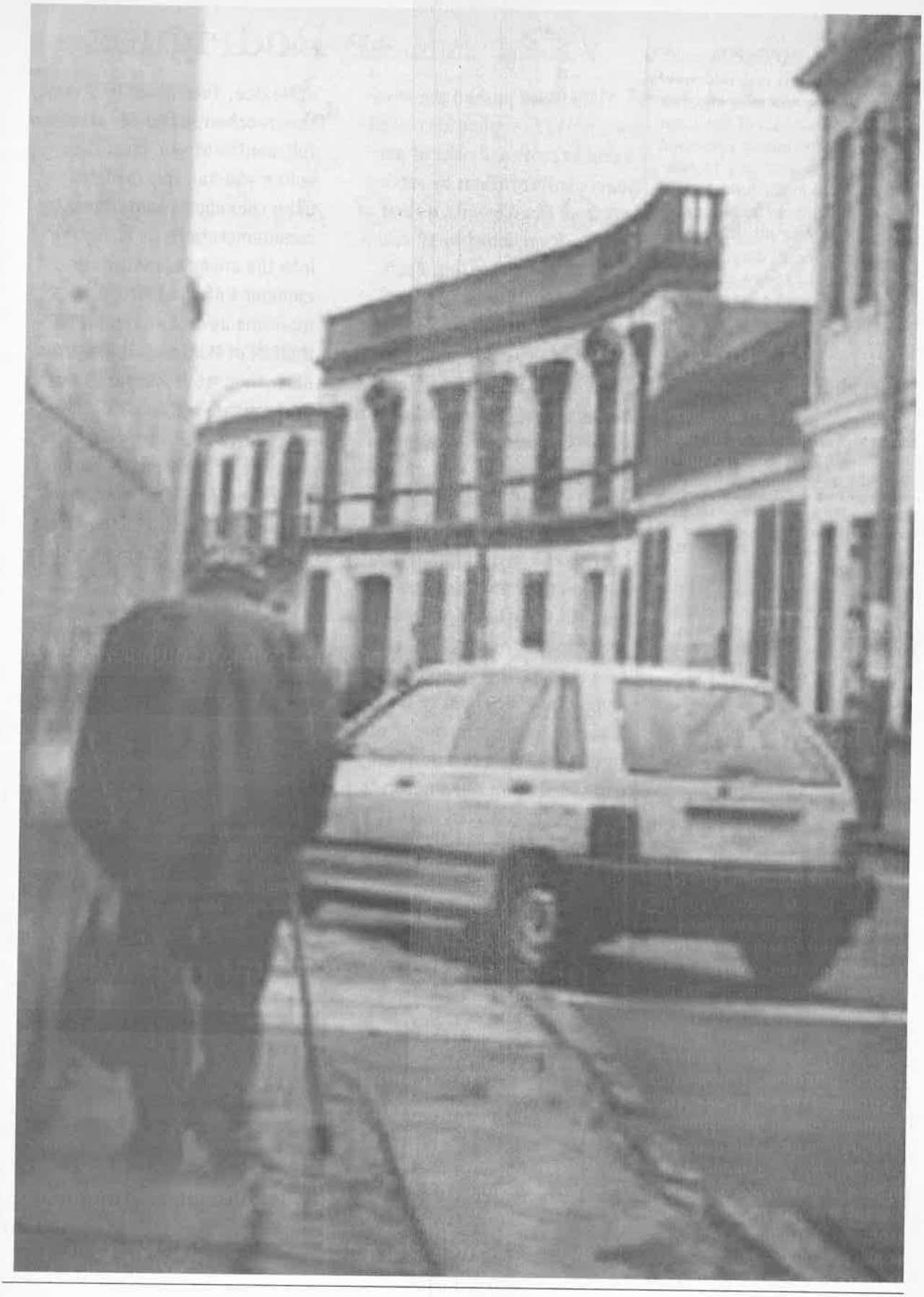
Vital Alsar Rodriguez

VITAL ALSAR pushed the envelope in 1973, tripling his navigational hazards and risks of personal confrontations by setting out from Ecuador with a fleet of three rafts manned by 12 volunteers of 8 nationalities. Each crewman ingested a quart of seawater every day by sipping it and cooking with it. None claimed to enjoy it. *La Expedición Las Balsas* was battered by frightful cyclonic storms in the Western Pacific, losing one raft at sea, yet all 12 sea dogs made it to Australia on the 179th day.

With 483 days of riding the Humboldt Current under his sea legs, Alsar switched to fresh water in 1977. He and his *compañeros* walked across the Andes from Guayaquil to the upper Amazon. In the Ecuadorean rain forest they built three galleons and sailed down the Amazon to emulate its discovery in 1541 by Francisco de Orellana. From Belem, the galleons were shipped to Tampico, Mexico, and rebuilt. They set sail for Spain in May, 1968. Long becalmed in the Gulf of Mexico, then beset by storms, they reached Santander after five full months at sea. Alsar then built a 450-ton ship modeled after Columbus's *Santa María* to commemorate its 1492 voyage into the unknown. Second-in-command of all of Vital Alsar's maritime adventures was MARC MODENA of Montreal. Seven years older than Vital, "Pepere" was a professional sea dog. He had served five years in the French Navy. He actually put in more raft time than Vital. In 1956 he had crossed the Atlantic Ocean from Nova Scotia to England on a cedar log raft.





Lima Diary

Daniel Gonzalo Alarcón

The cab driver is explaining why there is no radio in his car. He's young, with dark brown eyes and a boyish face frozen in a disinterested frown. He drives as if he has real antipathy for the vehicle, with jerks and starts, picking out potholes and challenging them, all with the same flat response, as if he were watching a movie that barely holds his attention.

"They stole it. Put the gun right here," he says, touching his index finger to his temple. "They took my money and the radio." He looks straight ahead at the road. I get the sense he does not trust me.

It is early morning in Lima, already the streets are clogged with trucks spewing dark black soot and buses that set off car alarms as they rumble past. He is accustomed to it. We all are. It is something we simply deal with. Traffic has been so bad for so long that it has ceased to become appalling. Better to leave those problems to those who get paid to worry about it. The rest of us will do whatever it takes to get by. To do something *a la criolla* is to do it any which way you can. That attitude, equal parts savage cruelty and sober realism, is a way of life for millions in this city.

That attitude, equal parts savage cruelty and sober realism, is a way of life for millions in this city.

He tells me he does not own the car; he rents it—which begins to explain his driving. The owner will not replace the radio, although the first time he did. "This is the second time?" I ask. "In how long?"

"Actually, it's the third time I've been robbed," he says, "but only the second time they got the radio. All in ten months." The driver shrugs. It doesn't seem like so much to him. "You can get radios real cheap downtown. Good ones. They can get any brand you want..."

"Like the kind they stole from you?"

"Just like that one," he answers flatly, ignoring my sarcasm. "Only 150 soles. You hate to buy from them, but a new one costs three times as much. You have to figure the thief probably only gets fifty for the radio. Next time I'll just save him the trouble and pay him out of my pocket."

Next time.

There is a robbery in Lima every six seconds. The day I heard that grim statistic on the radio, even the announcer seemed a little shocked. She read it haltingly, slowly, as if pausing for verification. *According to a new study...* I imagined her in the sound booth, looking at the sound engineer, shaking her head as if to say, Can *this be right?* Or perhaps more urgently: *Did you lock the door?*

Daniel Gonzalo Alarcón was born in Lima, raised in Alabama, and has lived in New York for the last five years. He works in a community center in East Harlem, teaching writing.

There is a robbery in Lima every six seconds.

Lima is fast approaching that critical mass after which urban centers defy any metaphor we could construct for them. That breadth, that density, that circus. That colony of noise and weight that can't be mapped out, drawn, or explained. Crawling up the Andean foothills to the East, pushing North along the coast, and staking claims on the sandy flatlands of the South. Only the ocean has managed to keep the city reigned in. Growth like this has no name. It is owned by the masses of desperately poor *campesinos* chasing hope and fleeing hunger. It is growth shaped by cruel histories and immediate needs. *Lima La Horrible*, she was called by the poets, even before the more recent transformations doubled and tripled the scale of her disfigurement. What would the poets call her today?

A terrifying lawlessness in central Lima after a certain hour.

In this context, a robbery every six seconds—somewhere in the chaotic universe of the Lima, *Cono Norte* to *Cono Sur*—does not seem so far-fetched. In the late afternoons, as night falls on another crawling commute out of central Lima, you don't have to look very far to see them: the *pirañitas* are famous for swarming a car, and undressing it with carnivorous speed and efficiency. Most theft is not as dramatic—purse snatching, hold-ups—but still there is a terrifying lawlessness in central Lima after a certain hour. I once saw a young boy of thirteen or fourteen stroll right up to a car and snatch the cap from a driver's head. He made no attempt to get away, only a couple of slow steps back to the curb, waving good-bye as impatient traffic pushed the startled driver on.

"The first time I was robbed, I remember perfectly: it was a Tuesday morning, nine or ten, I picked up two men in Miraflores. These weren't ordinary criminals, no not at all. They had on nice suits, tailored, imported cloth, they were high class. One was sitting behind me, the other in the passenger seat. I didn't expect a thing. Then all of a sudden, the one behind me jabbed his gun in my stomach, and the other one held his gun out low, so I could see it but no one else could."

"What did you do?" I ask.

"The first thing you should do when someone has a gun is ask them calmly what they want, " he says, as if he were dictating to a class. Three hold-ups do qualify him to say a thing or two on the subject. "Ask calmly, with no sudden movements, so they know you're not trying to be a hero. So I said, 'Look, if it's money you want, it's still early in the day, so there isn't much.'"

"What did they say?" I notice he hadn't really followed his own advice. Is it smart to tell gun-wielding thugs what they can't have?

"They said, 'We don't want your fucking money.' They told me they were taking my car, but that they would return it in five hours. If I called the police, they would find me and kill me."

"What did you do?"

"What could I do? They were professionals: they asked for a phone number where they could reach me, they said they would call by three o'clock that afternoon. They dropped me off on a corner in San Isidro and sped away."

Speculating about what use criminals would have for an untraceable car in Lima is very uncomfortable. Not too long ago a friend of my father's was kidnapped and held for ransom by an ex-business partner trying to fight off bankruptcy. They held him for two months while his family struggled to raise the money. I suddenly feel a little claustrophobic in the musty station wagon. I roll down my window. The cold morning air feels good, clean even, though I know that it isn't.

Lima is like the Pope's mosaic: dirty, smothered, its beauty on the edge of disappearing.

He senses my discomfort, and responds with a short laugh. "Don't worry. There were no foul odors or blood in the car when I got it back. They called, right on time, and said 'Your car is parked on such and such corner in Callao.'"

"They took the radio I think, just for the hell of it. They had much bigger business than that. It was an afterthought."

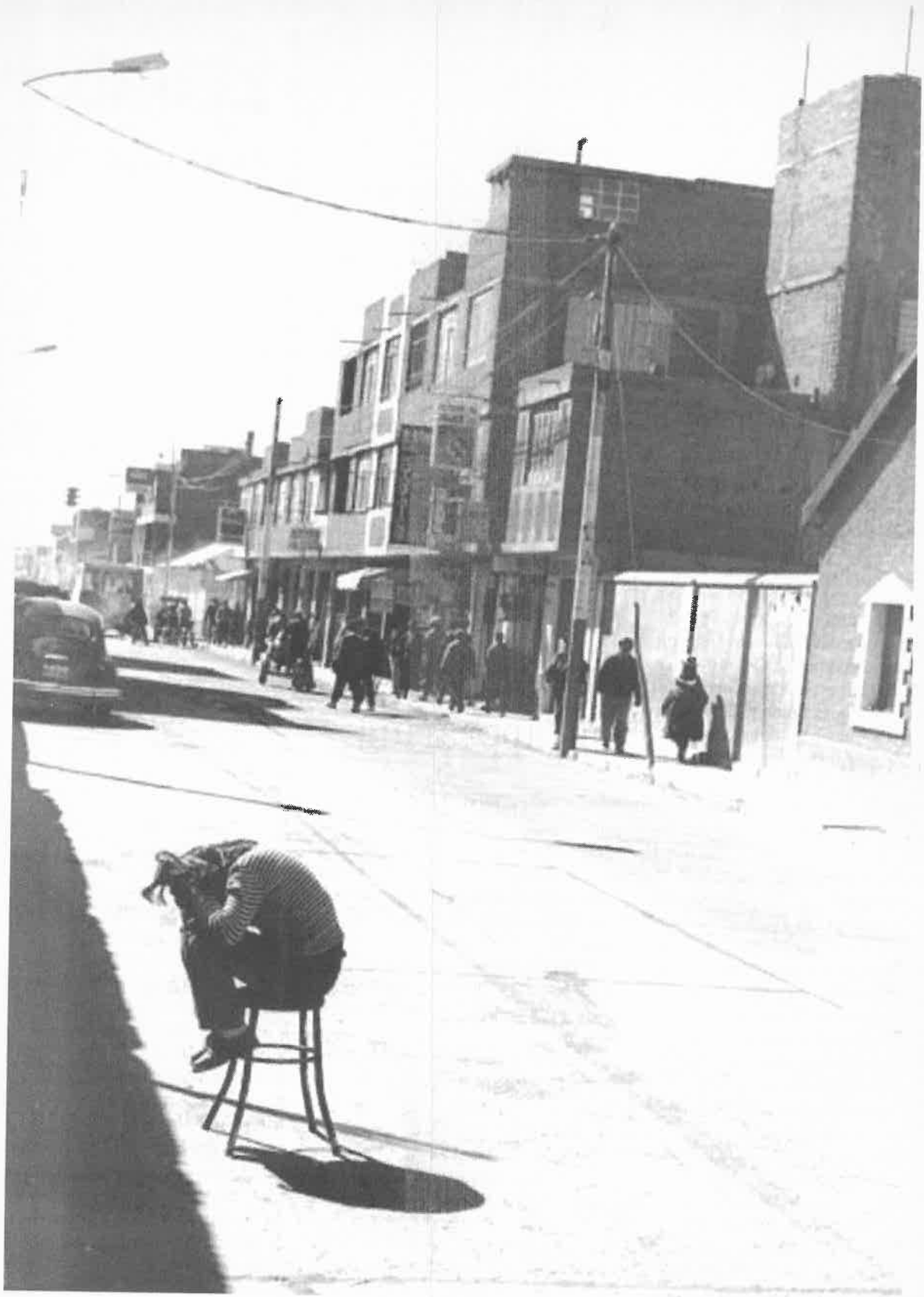
We ride in silence for a while along Salaverry and Sanchez Carrion, past the mosaic of colored tiles that was created to greet the Pope in 1984. It's since been covered in graffiti and an unhealthy layer of grime and grit. Lima has that special climate that pushes all colors towards gray. When the sun comes out—which isn't often during the bleak winter—the city wakes up in greens, blues, yellows, and even whites. Those sunny mornings are always a little surprising, the subject of conversation on buses and in cafes, among co-workers and friends. Shuttered windows open to the hazy light, and Lima seems a little more livable. There are those that say that Lima's hopeless gray sky is the Indian's revenge against the Spanish: that Pizarro's Quechua advisors picked the only melancholy harbor on the Peruvian coast and told the Spaniard to found his city there, dooming future generations to battle seasonal depression. On the days when Lima's weather cooperates the city can be magnificent: In the older neighborhoods there are quiet streets and parks, graceful understated architecture, an elegance more charming for its imperfections. But when the sky hangs heavy with salty sea air and the belching fumes of millions of cars—on those days, Lima is like the Pope's mosaic: dirty, smothered, its beauty on the edge of disappearing.

The second time?

"It was only a few months ago," he says, turning to face me. His unkempt black hair shoots over his ears and towards his eyes. "It was a man and a woman. I was on my way home, but I thought I'd do one more run to close out the night. It was just past midnight." He shakes his head. "I'd made good money that night."

"What happened?"

"I was taking them my way and they were talking and laughing. They seemed like a nice couple. When we got to the address they had given, a place in San Miguel, there were some people out front. It seems they were friends of theirs. The guy got out, but the girl stayed in the back seat, and I'm sitting there waiting to get paid, thinking I'll be home in a few minutes! Then before I know it, this bitch has me in a headlock and her boyfriend and his friends are tearing my car apart, looking for my money. They take my keys out of the ignition and throw them in the street so I can't go anywhere. Meanwhile the bitch is just slapping me over and over, while one of the men holds a knife to my throat. I was sure I was through!"



I nod in sympathy, mutter something about how dangerous the city can be. I know full well that he and I don't live the same lives, that we don't face the same dangers. I don't drive a cab in this city of thieves and murderers. My words are empty. I'm seized by that helplessness that comes often in Lima: that feeling of standing shoulder to shoulder with the drowning, unable to pull another body besides your own to the shore. Is unable the right word? Or is it unwilling?

"But thank God that I kept a spare key under the floor mat! I don't know how I remembered it, but the guys pulled out my bag of money and the sack breaks! Coins go everywhere, they're distracted, on their knees scraping coins off the cement, and I bite the whore's arm, she screams and lets go, I reach under the seat, grab the key, and drive like hell and get out of there!" He laughs to himself. "You should have heard that bitch scream! It was frightening."

"She was still in the car?"

"Yeah, and the whore wouldn't stop screaming." He shakes his head, and gives me a knowing smile. "You know how women can be."

"Did you take her to the police?"

His blank stare let me know that he had not. Finally he says, "What would the police have done? Nothing at all."

I don't know what I was thinking.

"I took her back to Comas and called up a few of my friends. We had our fun, made that bitch pay for what she'd done. Left the whore at the beach. Not even the sea can clean that dirty tramp now..."

I am speechless, grasping for words to fill the space I am sharing with a rapist. Somehow it caught me by surprise. "Were you worried that the other guys would come after her?" I ask.

He shakes his head. "Those guys, I'm telling you, they're the lowest of the low. They didn't give a damn about her. Once they had the money, they barely noticed she was gone. People like that are disgusting," he offers earnestly. "Just disgusting."

Bodies wash up on the shore in Lima every so often, always women, always anonymous.

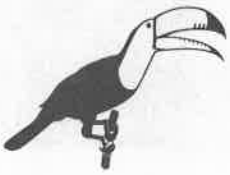
We drive in silence. The beach is cold at night, the Pacific winds come in hard along Lima's barren coast. I wonder if she lived through the night. Bodies wash up on the shore in Lima every so often, always women, always anonymous. The bodies are rarely claimed. I wonder what her name was.

I think he can tell how I feel. I want him to. The silence is long now; instinctively I reach for the radio, but the thieves didn't even leave any wires, only an uneven hole ripped out of the dashboard. No grace, no technique, only brute force.

"You know," he says all of a sudden, "I'm not sure if what I did was right, but I do know she stole my money." It is not a statement of retreat or regret. I look at him, and find myself nodding. He's not sure, he really doesn't know. Is there anything I can say?

"At the corner. You can let me out at the corner." The car slows to a stop. High tide leaves another body on the Pacific shore. I pay the fare, and close the door slowly. I don't say good-bye.

The drowned speeds away.



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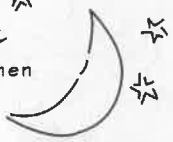

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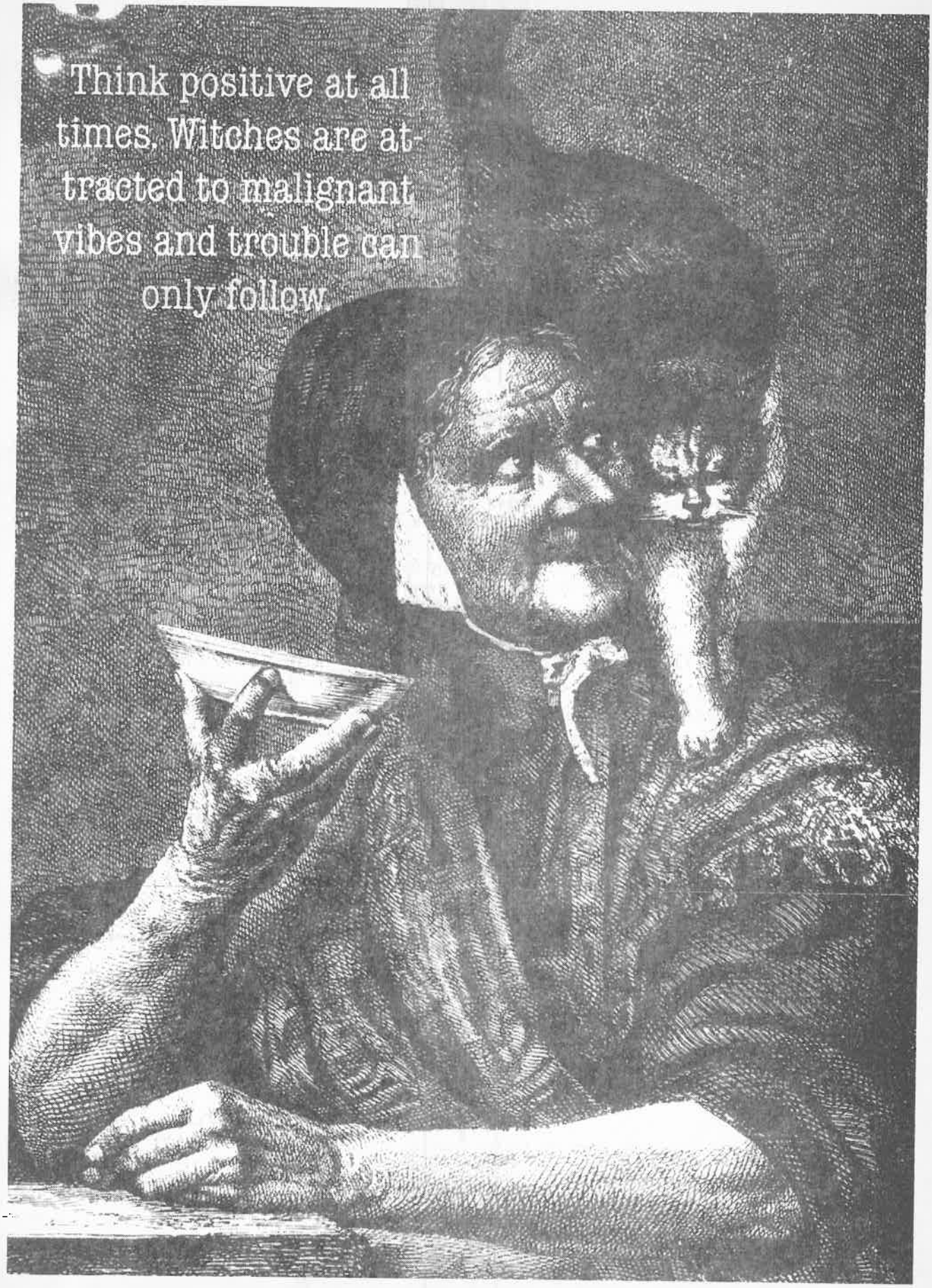
Think positive at all times. Witches are attracted to malignant vibes and trouble can only follow

La Bruja

Michael Baldwin

I was glad to be leaving Mapiri. After slogging and crawling for five days over the mountains and through the jungle to get there, I was exhausted. I'd heard it would be simple to get a ride back to La Paz. It wasn't. I could take a boat to Gauni and go by truck to La Paz, but I'd left most of my gear and travelers checks in Sorata. I'd have to find a truck.

At six in the morning, I climbed aboard a pick-up truck. But instead of heading off to Santa Elena, the driver spent the next hour tooling around town, honking his horn and looking for passengers. Every time I thought we were about to get under way, he'd circle back for one more lap through town, in hopes of picking up yet another passenger or two. When we finally pulled out, some two and a half hours later, the back of his truck was crammed with people. Most had hauled aboard all goods they hoped to sell in the market—baskets of bananas, bags of fruit, stunned chickens, bound pigs, and whatever else they could drag along.

There weren't any trucks in Santa Elena so I set out on foot. In the next town I found a truck to Sorata. It was already full of people, but not so many that you couldn't cram in several more. With two others, I squeezed aboard. Somehow I even ended up with a cramped but not uncomfortable spot to sit down.

Down the road we let off some passengers. When the truck started up again, we had three new passengers—all women. A Bolivian woman in baby blue corduroy pants stood out from the rest. She had a fanny pack slung in front and wore a multicolored blouse, alpaca sweater, and black tennis shoes. Her black hair, streaked with gray, was bleached brown at the edges. There was something peculiar about her, but I didn't give it much thought at the time.

I should have guarded my spot better, for as soon as I stood up to stretch my legs the three women grabbed my spot. They stretched out, leaving no room for me to sit down. I was left standing in the middle of the jouncing truck.

baskets of bananas, bags of fruit, stunned chickens, bound pigs, and whatever else they could drag along.

Michael Baldwin has traveled extensively in Mexico and Central America, serving in the Peace Corps in Costa Rica after college and working as the Assistant Director for the Uruguayan American School in Montevideo for three years. He moved on to become the Director of a National Science Foundation in Laredo, Texas. Currently he is a professional educator, serving as the Elementary Science Specialist for the Brownsville Independent School District in Texas. He enjoys photography, hiking, paleontology, and running.

Maybe the other passengers knew we were heading up into the mountains. I didn't. I was too irritated and annoyed by the women hogging my space. Suddenly the temperature dropped and cold raindrops began to sting my face. In no time, I was freezing, my hands numb, my extra clothes and gear out of reach. With most of the others passengers hunkered down, I had no choice but to stand upright in short sleeves and tropical pants, buffeted by the rain and wind.

One thing galled me more than anything. Here I was, shielding from the rain and wind the woman in the corduroy pants, the most offensive of the three intruders who had stolen my spot. Oblivious to my wrath, she slumbered away. My feet must had disturbed her, for every once in a while she would scowl and make little complaining noises. I scrutinized her, trying to figure out what makes people like her so rude.

She must be a witch!

Suddenly it struck me—she was just like the witches or *brujas* that I knew from the Texas-Mexico border and the jungle regions of Costa Rica. Arrogant and self-centered, she had a knack for irritating everyone around her. With her odd dress and way of making others uncomfortable, she must be a witch!

Yes, a witch! I'd figured her out. Somehow knowing this made it much easier to put up with the cold as we headed through the snow-covered passes.

As we rolled along, I came up with more evidence to support my theory. For example, I watched her slip a long, tubular bottle from her purse. I thought it was medicine at first but then saw it contained feathers, metal objects, tiny figurines, and colored beads which rattled as she twirled it about and hummed a strange song. Everyone looked away, as if making eye contact might call down some misfortune. Her mysterious movements, the fear she instilled in others, pointed to witchery.

About two hours out of Sorata, her friend sat up to look around. Quickly, I dropped down on the floor between them. They said nothing, but I could tell they were irritated.

At a house by the road we stopped to buy peaches. Sorata is a peach-growing area. We must be getting close. Immediately, the witch hopped up and, in a loud voice, demanded two pesos worth of peaches. "*Que rico*," she proclaimed to one and all. But when she actually bit into one she changed her tune. Then she complained bitterly. They were hard and green. And they cost too much. Six peaches for two pesos? In La Paz, she protested, you got ten for that price. She refused to pay until she got two more. Of course everyone else paid two pesos for six peaches, even those who bought twenty or thirty peaches.

As she finished eating each peach she bounced the pit off the head of an old man!

Once on the road, she bit into her peach. "It's soooo sweet," she raved. To my surprise, she even offered me one. I accepted reluctantly and bit into the hard green fruit. Moments later she was hysterically laughing and badmouthing the peaches again. But of course that didn't stop her from eating one after the other, complaining all the while.

But now her rudeness reached new heights. As she finished eating each peach she bounced the pit off the head of an old man! Over and over again it went. She'd eat a peach, complain about it, and flip it towards the old man, bouncing it off his head. Anyone else would get diarrhea from eating one or two—she put away seven. I don't know why the old man put up with it—a strange woman pegging him with peach pits. But he did. Maybe he, too, sensed something impious about this woman.

Surrounded by passengers, their cheeks bulging with coca leaves

After scarfing down the peaches, she turned on me with a stream of nosey questions that I didn't feel like answering. The less she knew about me the better. Even so, she managed to dig out

that I was a biologist and studied nature. I neatly deflected further queries by asking if she knew of any local plants used in medicine. She did, but stressed the importance of knowing which plants to use. As a matter of fact, many people used coca as a cure for some ailments. She herself had taken coca for a terrible stomachache ten years ago. She'd had no stomach problems since. What did I think of the American government's efforts to eliminate coca growing in Bolivia, she wanted to know. Surrounded by passengers, their cheeks bulging with coca leaves, I replied cautiously....Coca leaves weren't the problem. It was addiction to cocaine. It didn't answer her question but confused her enough to drop the topic.

When we parted in Sorata that evening, she asked me the time. Before I could answer she grabbed my wrist to read my watch—9:35. Later in my hotel I thought about the events of the trip. I congratulated myself on escaping the witch. I'd come away with a good story. Better yet, no harm done. I checked my heavy-duty 100 meter digital watch to see if it was time for supper. The face was blank. The witch? No, probably the battery. A coincidence that it died just then. I replaced the battery and it's working fine. Not my travel alarm clock, however. It's been losing two hours every day. The battery again? And the alarm clock in my apartment? It's been flashing the wrong time ever since I got home. A power outage while I was away on my trip? Could be. Or are all my clocks cursed? Only time will tell.

Are all my clocks cursed? Only time will tell.

Either way, one must always beware of "brujas". Keeping a low profile is the best way to avoid the attention of eccentrics. Think positive at all times. Witches are attracted to malignant vibes and trouble can only follow. When I am traveling I often bring small gifts and I am especially polite to all strangers, just in case. This time I was fortunate. I escaped with a sour peach and a little trouble telling time.

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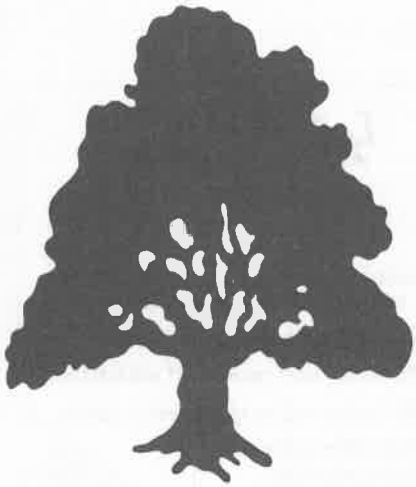

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THE SAE HISTORICAL VIDEO SERIES

by Michael Ryan

To get the South American Explorers Video Collection underway, I got a few film-to-tape transfers made from my exensive 16mm film collection of historical documentaries about Latin America. The following films are available only through the SAE and are so unique that most members would find them interesting.

I would like to continue making available at least one or two historical documentary films about the Andean countries. I hope that my efforts are considered a contribution to the goals of the SAE as a whole. There is not much profit to be made in this sort of thing, but I do take pride in being able to do it.

Here are the first three videos in the SAE Historical Collection. To order, call 800-274-0568 or see the order form on page 63.

Rough Road to Panama, Rugged Road to Cape Horn: The Sullivan C. Richardson Pan American Highway Expedition, 1940-1941

A two part 60-minute video made from the rare documentary, filmed in color on Kodachrome, of the first successful attempt to drive an automobile from the United States to the tip of South America. Sullivan C. Richardson and two companions explore the route that would eventually become the Pan American Highway.

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Wheels Across the Andes: The Armand Denis Expedition

A classic documentary account of 1940's South American exploration. Partly sponsored by the Chrysler Corp. to show the durability of their trucks, the Armand Denis expedition fords rivers and climbs mountains throughout Ecuador and Peru. Their final destination: Bolivia, where they film local festivals and conduct high-altitude research in human physiology. 30 minutes.

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The Bridge and This Is Ecuador

Everything you ever wanted to know about the development of air transportation in South America but were afraid to ask. Two short black and white films portray South America during the World War II era. Willard Van Dyke's classic 1944 documentary, *The Bridge*, explains South America's potential for economic growth and takes a closer look at the development of air transportation on the continent. *This is Ecuador*, filmed in 1942 for the United States Office for Inter-American Affairs, highlights the nation's strategic importance as an American ally. 45 minutes.

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Rabies

Dr. Joseph Breault

Q: Should I get rabies shots before I go to South America?

A: Consider getting the rabies vaccine if:

1. Due to the nature of your travel, you will be in contact with wild or domestic animals. This includes anything from jogging or cycling to volunteering at a wildlife clinic or supervising a field study. If so, you are more likely to be bitten by a rabid animal than the average traveler. Spelunkers and other cave explorers should definitely get the rabies vaccination because you can get rabies from aerosolized bat secretions.

2. You are traveling to remote areas—it may be very difficult to get timely medical care in isolated areas if you are bitten.

3. You are staying in an underdeveloped area for longer than two months, because your risk for exposure to bites will be exponentially higher.

4. You are traveling in areas where rabies cases are high.

Reliable information about rabies in South America is difficult to come by. The World Health Organization has a website with human rabies deaths in various countries through 1997 at **www.who.int/emc/diseases/zoo/PAHO_data/pahoindex.htm.**

Human Rabies Deaths

Country	1996	1997
United States	4	4
Ecuador	65	9
Peru	19	12
Andean Area	94	42
Brazil	25	25

Keep in mind that the number of rabies deaths in most countries outside the US are probably underreported.

Q: Let's say I'm bitten when I get to Ecuador. What should I do?

A: If the animal seems normal, the bite was not completely unprovoked, and the animal can be confined for 10 days to insure it does not develop rabies symptoms, then you may not need rabies shots. However, if the animal that bit you is wild or acts abnormally, then it should be killed and have its brain tested for rabies in a local lab. If the animal has escaped, or if you're nowhere near a lab that can test for rabies, get rabies shots. Rabies is a serious problem in underdeveloped countries and there may not be accurate surveillance data, so presume the worst after a bite. The ideal situation where a friendly but provoked dog bites you is not likely in your travels. Even more unlikely is the possibility that you can monitor the animal for 10 days following the attack. Consult a local public health official or doctor in the area for advice. Don't delay treatment until clinical symptoms appear—by that time the possibilities for recovery are slim. It's better to be safe rather than sorry. There is no treatment for rabies, other than the post-exposure treatment injections discussed below which need to be given ASAP. (Also wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water. Use a straw to flush soapy water into deep bites.) The incubation period for rabies ranges from 10 days to over a year and averages 30 to 50 days. With multiple bites, or with bites on the head, neck and trunk, it can be less than 10 days. It is far better to take a few days to get to a major medical center that has the right rabies shots than to be inappropriately treated in a remote area.

Q: What does a rabies vaccination cost?

A. It is expensive. The cost depends on which approach you take. The safest approach should be used in higher risk situations. You get three shots of the vaccine (acceptable choices are HDCV = human diploid cell vaccine; PCEC=purified chick embryo cell vaccine; RVA=rabies vaccine absorbed) on days 1, 7 and 21 or 28. This is called pre-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). Costs may vary from place to place, but prices can be from $152 to 188 per shot plus the cost of the initial office visit, which might range from $25 to $65. If a potentially rabid animal then bites you overseas, you should get two additional vaccine shots to be fully protected. The total cost for the five shots comes to about $760 to $940 plus the cost of office visits.

The approach for lower risk situations is not to get any precautionary shots (PEP). However, if a potentially rabid animal bites you, you would need 6 shots. You need the rabies immune globulin (RIG) shot immediately, which costs about $775 to $848 for a 10 ml average dose. On following days you get 5 vaccine shots (HDCV or PCEC or RVA) with the prices noted above. Thus the total is about $1535 to $1788 plus office visit costs for treating a rabid bite when no PEP was given.

Q: Are booster shots needed?

A: Yes. For situations where you travel frequently in high-risk areas, you may need a booster shot every 2 years after your PEP 3-shot series. Because 6% of

people have reactions to boosters, get a rabies titer blood test to see if you need one. The cost of the blood test is about $45.25 ($25 for the lab test, $10 for blood drawing charge, and $10.25 handling for a send-out lab).

Q: Do the shots hurt?

A: No. Current vaccines are relatively painless and are given in your arm, like a flu shot.

Q: How can I save money on rabies vaccine?

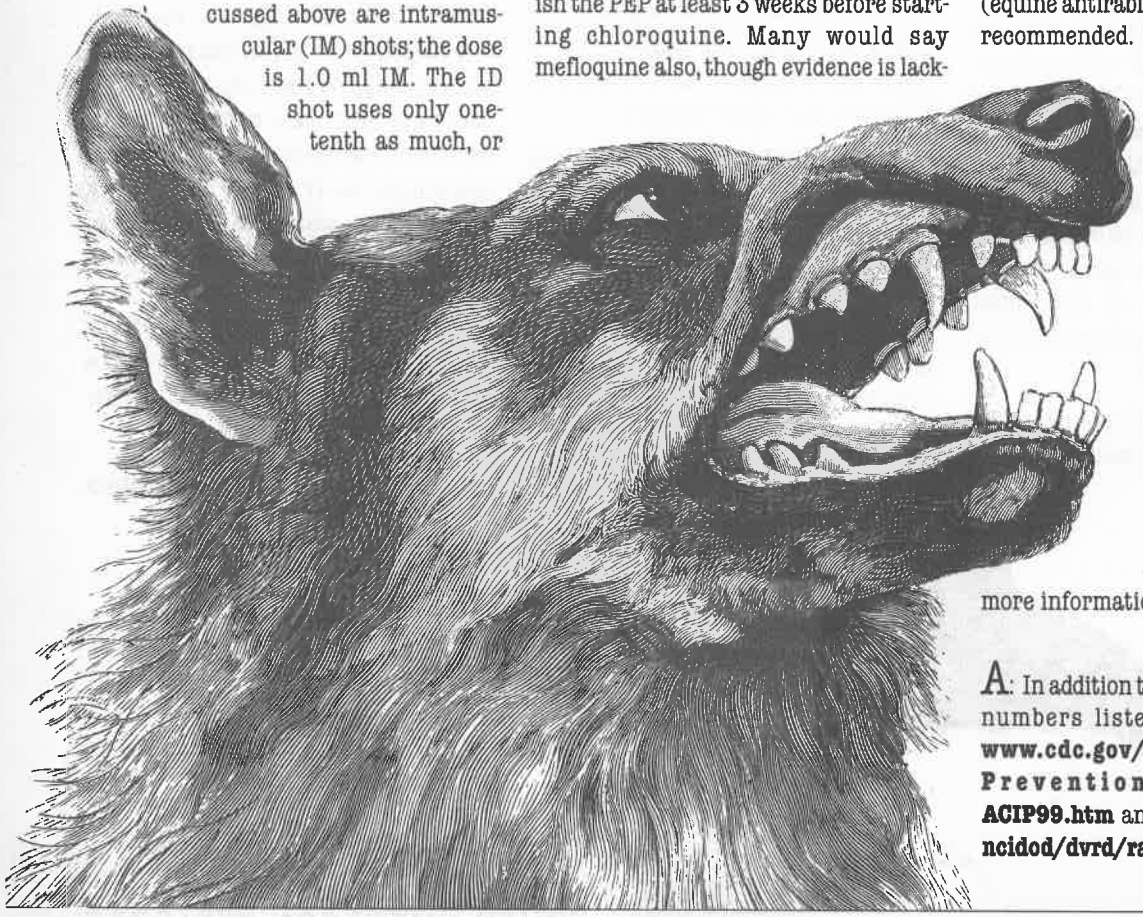
A: Call a few places to see where the total price will be cheapest. Contact the local public health department and university health centers, as they may have less expensive sources or a free clinic for rabies protection with at-cost vaccine programs. Second, the 3-shot PEP series can be done intradermally (ID) using the HDCV. All of the shots discussed above are intramuscular (IM) shots; the dose is 1.0 ml IM. The ID shot uses only one-tenth as much, or 0.1 ml ID. Still, the ID dose is often more than half the cost of the IM dose (see **http://www.alapubhealth.org/epidemiology/sources.htm** for manufactures and wholesale pricing). Since most places do not use much HDCV, and they must carry the IM for post exposure treatment, the ID form may not be carried. One local clinic here in New Orleans carried the ID and charged $96 per dose. This would bring the 3-dose PEP injection cost down to $288. This form can also be used for booster shots if needed. Third, you can save money by going through your family doctor. He or she will not have the rabies vaccine in their office. But if you have done your homework about the cheapest place in your city to get it, then your family doctor can write a prescription for it, saving you doctor visit costs at the travel or infectious disease clinics that stock the vaccine.

Q: What about drug interactions?

A: If using the ID route, you must finish the PEP at least 3 weeks before starting chloroquine. Many would say mefloquine also, though evidence is lacking on this. Since chloroquine to prevent malaria prophylaxis is taken 2 to 3 weeks before you leave, you should start the rabies vaccine ID shots more than 2 months before you travel. Many travelers do not plan months ahead for vaccines, so the IM route can be used without regard to when chloroquine is started.

Q: If I choose to get treatment only if bitten, with no preliminary vaccine shots, how do I get the shots I need in South America?

A: One disadvantage of using the post-exposure treatment as the sole form of vaccination is that approved vaccines (HDCV or PCEC or RVA) and RIG may not be available in some countries. Major medical centers in the largest cities will often either have the correct shots or can get them within a day or so—but this may be quite expensive. Substitutes for approved vaccine (duck embryo, rat or mouse brain vaccines) or for RIG (equine antirabies serum or ARS) are not recommended. Instead, if there is any question, call the nearest American consulate, the Department of State Citizens Emergency Center (202-647-5225 days, 202-634-3600 after hours) or the CDC (404-639-3311 days, 404-639-2888 nights and weekends) for emergency telephone advice. You may have to be evacuated to a major medical center if you're bitten.



Q: Where can I find more information?

A: In addition to the websites and phone numbers listed above, see **http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/rabies/Prevention&Control/ACIP/ACIP99.htm** and **http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/rabies/.**

QUITO CLUB

The rains of April have come and gone. The mudslides have been cleared away and the sun has come out over the mountains. Pods of humpback whales frolic off the Pacific Coast.

Ecuador continues to grapple with the switchover to its new national currency—the U.S. dollar. Guayaquil and Quito elected new mayors, but otherwise all is pretty quiet on the Ecuadorean front. Even Guagua Pichincha has settled down as it slowly builds its eighth dome. Tungurahua erupts regularly near Baños, but this has not prevented townsfolk from returning to their homes despite the orange alert.

With the predicted strikes over, the government's austerity measures never materialized despite sharp price increases in gas and other commodities. The price of gas more than doubled. The government did raise salaries for professionals and government workers to offset the rising cost of living. A settlement was negotiated with teachers and hospital workers who did strike. Both groups are back at work. The economic outlook is brighter but full recovery will be long in coming. Many Ecuadorians continue to look for work outside of the country, so much so that the Immigration office is out of passports.

The economic picture aside, Ecuador avenged its loss to Paraguay in the World Cup qualifiers by subsequently beating Peru.

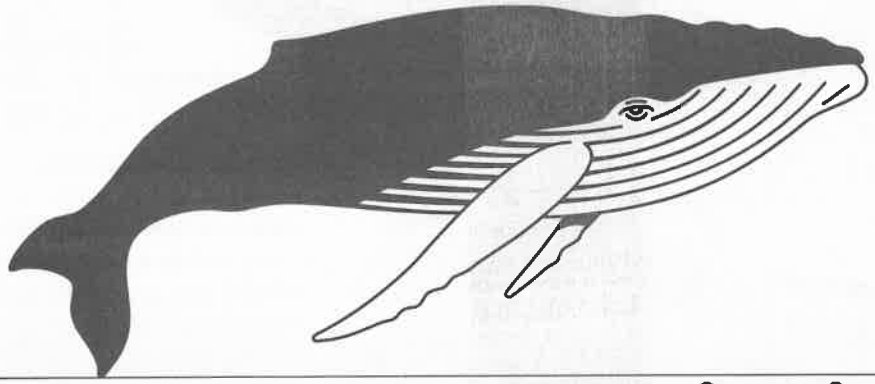
On the Club front, Diana is stepping down as Quito clubhouse manager sometime in August. She will, however, stay on as Regional Manager to coordinate relations between the Clubhouses. She can be reached at the Casa Mojanda near Otavalo. Boz, former Cusco Club Co-Manager, will be taking over for Diana, and Alicia will continue on as Assistant Manager. Caz will work in Quito as a part-time volunteer.

Long-time staff member Linette has gone north. She is happily employed as a "Latin American Expert" in Oakland, CA, where she is reported to be pulling down a salary greater than that of the entire Quito Club staff combined. Simon is back in Quito, while Eddie is legally beholden to a local girl, having tied the knot on July 15th. Roc photographed the event, and all bets are that next time he will be the groom, not the photographer.

Club projects are thriving. The Volunteer Resources Desk (VRD) is rapidly expanding with the addition of ever more NGO's, volunteer positions, project evaluations, etc. We're also swimming in wonderful trip reports. Members, keep it up! The Club's popular slide shows and talks have included presentations on Ecuadorian weaving and Pasochoa. Club members and friends also enjoyed hearing two Norwegian daredevils recount their exploits in Antarctica and above the Arctic circle. The "Walkabouts" group has taken several moderate excursions. What else? Oh yes, we finally networked two of the Club's three computers and, ever mindful that cleanliness is next to godliness, we cleaned up the bodega. Which brings to mind that members who've left their gear and such beyond the allotted time should get in touch with the Club.

Thanks to all those thoughtful members who generously hand-carried books and coffee. Thanks also to Russell, the volunteer carpenter for the La Tola project. He has returned to the U.S., but his bed-making project lives on. Diana's hubby, Wayne, is teaching the La Tola kids to make high-quality cigar boxes. Finally, our gratitude and warmest thanks to Steve Urban, Robert Beach, Clare Trimbun, the Bradbury's, Steve Dushan, the Lidner's and the Selin's for their generous donations to the La Tola project. (For more info on La Tola, see next page.)

—Diana



La Tola: Los Niños Migrantes

by Diana Morris, Quito Clubhouse
explorer@saec.org.ec

La Tola was founded over 20 years ago in Quito, Ecuador by Salesian brothers. It provides shelter for over 400 homeless children and adults. La Tola also runs a program for orphaned and abused boys ages 5 to 17.

In Issue 60 of the *South American Explorer*, we reported that SAE volunteer Russell helped launch the "Beds for La Tola" project. He taught five youths from La Tola to build bunk beds for the children staying at the shelter. To date, the kids have four new beds to sleep on, which they made themselves. Thanks to your donations, we've purchased enough lumber and tools to make four more bunk beds and to pay a stipend to the boys for their work. Unfortunately, Russell had to return to the United States, but he launched an excellent project! If you're a carpenter who can continue Russell's work and volunteer time for "Beds for La Tola", please contact the Quito clubhouse at explorer@saec.org.ec.

The SAE is assisting a new group at La Tola—young girls who beg for food and money on the streets of Quito. We've set up an evening program to teach arts and crafts, very basic reading and writing, and personal hygiene. For this project, we'd appreciate any new and used classroom supplies. Also, if you have any spare time while you're in Quito, we always need volunteer teachers for this group.

The Casa Mojanda in Otovalo hosted the boys from La Tola for a weekend last month. They spent time hiking, helping in the garden, horseback riding, and enjoying the fresh air. We hope to continue these monthly weekend activities and appreciate any support you can offer. Please contact Eddie at the Quito clubhouse for more information.

Thank you the members who have e-mailed us about volunteering at La Tola. It's been very busy in the Quito office, but hopefully we've replied to each and every one of you! Please keep in mind that volunteering will allow you to work for an organization that might actually *need* you rather than one that can pay you. La Tola is not in a position to offer room or board in exchange for your help but needs volunteer help to keep the children's projects running. Do be honest with yourself about why you want to volunteer, and be realistic about what you think you might accomplish.

A very special thank you to all of you who have given second-hand clothing, toys in good condition, finanical support, and volunteer help. We especially appreciate the generous donations from members Steve Urban, Robert Beach, Clare Trimbun, the Bradbury's, Steve Dushan, the Lidner's, and the Selin's. As Ecuador's economy worsens, the services of organizations like La Tola are desperately needed. If you're planning to visit Quito and have room in your luggage, donations of shoes and clothes for kids ages 5 to 12 are appreciated!

In the next issue of the *SAE*, we'll tell you our plans for Christmas at La Tola. It's months ahead, but we're already planning our fourth annual dinner for the thousand homeless people at the shelter and a party with gifts for the boys. Stay tuned!

Donations for La Tola can be sent care of the SAE Ithaca office, 126 Indian Creek Road, Ithaca, NY 14850.

CUSCO CLUB

And so we made it. One whole year of Cusco beingness. Was it tough? Hard? Downright stressful? Yep, you bet. We juggled the books, cooked the books, went without food, thought of eating the pets . . . it is too grim to go on.

We've weathered the hard times and the bitter winds of an Andean winter. But spring is just around the corner, that wonderful season when the lovable Andean guinea pig (cuy) sallies forth from its cozy burrow and looks around for a mate. Soon the hills will resound to the glorious mating call of this endearing rodent. To the peoples of the high mountains, the cuy symbolizes rebirth. And of course, to our clubhouse in Cusco, the cuy means birth and continued life.

Our gratitude to all our members who joined the Sacred Order of the Cuy. Without you there would be no Cusco Clubhouse. We now need a few more members with your vision, your greatness of heart, your nobility.

But some of you are not yet Cuy. Fear not, it is not too late. Cuydom can be yours.

The Sacred Order of the Cuy is a secret society of members who loyally banded together to found the Cusco Clubhouse. Only members of the Order get to flash the one-and-only cuy membership card (with the bite mark in one corner), receive their own copy of the haunting legend of the cuy, learn the secret cuy handshake and sign of the cuy, and are known now, and forever more, as founders of the Cusco Clubhouse.

For a mere $50, or a slightly-more-than-mere $500, or a much-more-than-mere $1,000, you can bring credit upon yourself, your family, and heirs throughout eternity. The time to get your name on the plaque of honor is now. For more information on how you can belong to the Sacred Order of the Cuy, see our webpage at www.samexplo.org.

Remember to show your cuy card when you get to Cusco. Only members of the Sacred Order get to view the golden reliquary—the final resting place of the Sacred Cuy.

Thanks to the cuy, we have survived yet another Inti Raymi. One more Corpus Christ was celebrated, in all its glorious splendor. And the imperial capital of Cusco continues to attract travelers from around the world to its mystical heights. It's all here—mountains, ruins, nightlife, hot springs, hikes, waterfalls.

The book exchange and library are thriving. We are overflowing with chocolate chips for our club cookies. Trip reports are getting better all the time. All this we owe to the goodness of our many thoughtful members. Special thanks goes to founding member Ken Wright who keeps us stocked with Machu Picchu maps. Don't forget to reserve one or more of Ken Wright's magnificent 2001 Inca Empire calendar that celebrates Incan engineering triumphs. It will be available at the Cusco Clubhouse starting in September. Our boundless gratitude goes out to Cusco Clubhouse founding member Ralph Kopp, who keeps us stocked with great paperback books.

Boz and Caz are soon to be on the move. No, not leaving the SAE, but returning to Quito. Boz will take over from Diana as club manager. (Note: some of the chocolate, coffee, and other goodies should be forwarded to Quito!)

Our wonderful Cathy continues compiling her list of restaurants, hostals, outfitters, etc. offering discounts to club members. And Isabel will still be found in the kitchen conjuring up delectable Andean dishes and new cake creations. We don't know what we would have done without Dutchies Hendrik and Myrte, both fabulous volunteers.

—Boz and Caz

LIMA CLUB

Livin' The Lima Loca!!

Surf's up here in Lima—but not at the Lima Clubhouse. The tidal wave of staffers has ebbed. Currently, there are only 3 of us here, unlike in April and May when volunteers inundated the Club, nine in all. We started out with Janice, Tim, and Cecilie. Andy, Janice's brother, showed up in March. Tom Germanic (owner of Café de Guias in Chachapoyas) followed. He slept on our couch and volunteered while waiting for his Peruvian papers. Then came Erica Fulker, who bunked down on the other couch. At this point Ian returned from a two month trip. Irked to find all the couches taken, he opted for a berth at Bruno's. Bruno, with his upper crust French tastes, refused to even look at the Club's couches. Nor did Ali, who claimed they were too straight for his liking.

Once started, the exodus was fast and furious. Tom went back to his café, Cecilie soared off to Norway. (She will return in August.) Ali flew the coop to Spain. Ian stayed on for a bit in Lima, then headed north to bigger and better things in Quito. Erica is in Colorado. Janice writes that she is happily settled in Edmonton, Canada. She will be sorely missed and we thank her for being mother hen to staff and members alike over the past few years. Her contributions to the Lima Clubhouse are many. It was Janice who brought about the Club's facelift, ending an era of salmon colored walls. Our thanks to volunteers Sarah, Ian, and Ali for all their time and hard work in the SAE.

For some time, Manager Tim Currie has been making moves to depart. When a passing National Geographic film crew invited him to come along, he bolted. At this moment he's somewhere out in the Carabaya with SAE member Paolo Greer on a 6-week adventure. For now, Tamara Houston, from Bend, Oregon, is at the helm along with Bruno and Andy. Tamara went out and got robbed the first week she got here. (Best to get these things out of the way early.) Tamara claims to be around for the long haul and the Club welcomes new blood!

Politically, Peru is still hopping. Police break up occasional peaceful marches and demonstrations which pose no threat whatsoever to tourists.

On the lighter side, Canucks Andy and Sarah built a pair of fine hockey nets and celebrated Canada Day in Breña with beers and a fierce, take-no-hostages game of street hockey. Rumor has it that the Canadian Consulate cancelled their festivities!

-Andy

PS- Internet cafes are springing up all over Lima. Given this turn of events, the Club will no longer offer computer time for sending e-mail. The Club will still receive member e-mail, print e-mail, and put e-mail in a file for members. Members wishing to receive e-mail at the Club should use the following address: **montague@amauta.rcp.net.pe**

ITHACA CLUB

Paranoia

So here it is. *The South American Explorer* in the old format. Well, almost. There is a little less color (actually 14 pages less) but you can't always get what you want. In most respects it's just like the magazine that created the Great Howl when we switched to the much cheaper and artistically superior literary tabloid format. Still, we are not about

to pop open that tin of grubs anytime soon.

Is the new format here to stay? Good question. Maybe yes, maybe no. It really depends on all sorts of unknowns. Like whether some Explorers Club decides to sue us again. Unlikely? Well everyone thought it was unlikely they would sue us at all. But they did and that was many thousands of dollars ago. Someday we hope to regale the membership with all abominable particulars of the lawsuit. But this will have to wait for financially sunnier times. Why? Well, lets put it this way. Here's a question we posed to our attorney. And his response:

SAE: Between us, is there anything that precludes us from publishing any or all of the correspondence between us, you, you and Concannon, etc., including the full text of the proposed confidentiality agreement? Is this not all part of the record and open for inspection and to be quoted by anybody wishing to tell the tale?

Lawyer: I must advise against attempting to publish any attorney client communications. In the event you misstate the communications between ConCannon (sic) and I, or SAE and I, then you would waive the attorney-client privilege when they sue SAE and you personally for defamation (if I correctly anticipate your article). Lets assume their case lacks merit. Are you and SAE ready and capable of defending a suit in Manhattan or Philadelphia? Just a thought.

Discussions in settlement are always off the record until they are memorialized and recorded. Such discussions cannot be used in a Court of Law. It would be extremely bad form, and may be actionable, for SAE to divulge any of these discussions. It would probably start another suit, this time in State Court.

✧✧✧

"Bad form"?... Assume their case lacks merit.... capable of defending in Manhattan or Philadelphia... Another suit, this time in State Court? Wow. Is that a threat or not? And from the attorney we paid 175 dollars an hour.

Anyway, we hoped to regale the membership with all the grungy details of the lawsuit but I suspect the legal advice, however unpalatable, is essentially sound and reflects the distasteful realities. In any event the full tale will have to await a time when we can afford to defend ourselves.

On the brighter side, the letter we recently received from the US Government was not about our business practices. For a while, at least, we have nothing to fear from the US Antitrust Statutes. It does not appear the SAE will be forcibly broken up into two or more independent organizations. No need for paranoia on that score.

Even better, the two hard drives with the Club's secret archives turned up behind the Xerox machine. Now if that stuff ever got out, well...

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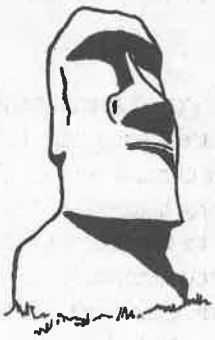

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Martin Conway

by Daniel Buck

William Conway, a canon of the Church of England, hoped that his eldest son, Martin, would become a mathematician or a clergyman. Martin recognized at a fairly young age that he had little aptitude for numbers and less for the cloth, but he never could make up his mind about just what he was best suited for. Over his long, fruitful life he was, by turns, a pioneering mountain climber, an art historian, a writer, a politician, and an entrepreneur.

Conway began hiking and climbing in the Alps in the 1870s during breaks from his studies. Switzerland soon became his second home. In 1892, at the age of 36, he set off for the Himalayas, with the 28,250-foot K2 as his daunting goal. He didn't succeed. But then neither did anyone else until almost sixty years later.

By the late 1890s, his eye had turned to South America. This attraction might have sprung from his friendship with Edward A. Fitzgerald, with whom he had climbed in the Alps and who had recently led an expedition to Aconcagua.

In 1898, Conway and a brace of Swiss guides went to Bolivia to climb in the Cordillera Real. They made the first successful ascent of the high Pico Sur on the Illimani massif (and planted a small Union Jack), despite having been deserted by their Bolivian porters. They were later stymied in their attempt on Illampu (then known as Sorata), some 100 miles to the northwest in the same range. Illampu was not conquered until 1928. Conway's effort has been called "the first major climbing expedition to the area," a garland by default, inasmuch as Bolivia had been little visited by alpinists.

Conway wrote up his adventures in *Climbing & Exploration in the Bolivian Andes: A Record of Climbing & Exploration in the Cordillera Real in the Years 1898 & 1900* (1901). Like many travelers past and present, he swooned over the village of Sorata: "Few towns in the world enjoy a more magnificent position. On either side are beautiful slopes, reaching aloft to fine crests of hills; straight in front there stretches away the purple hollow of the deep Mapiri Valley; while behind, the might precipices of Mount Sorata fling themselves aloft a sheer 14,000 feet to their crown of ice, and the protruding buttress named Illampu almost seems to overhang." The climate was "near perfection," the water "excellent," and the flowers "the brightest." There was even a weekly newspaper, whose reporter interviewed Conway and, pending publication later in the week, hung a copy of his handwritten story on a saloon wall for all to peruse.

He jogged to safety on his four-footed mule waving his six-shot revolver.

Conway himself was almost hung while doing a topographical survey near Illimani: A group of campesinos, who blamed a recent spate of bad weather on his hocus-pocus with the theodolite, set their dogs on him and pelted him with stones. He jogged to safety on his four-footed mule waving his six-shot revolver.

Martin Conway, c. 1893

The entrepreneurial Conway took advantage of this Bolivian sojourn (and a second one in 1900) to look into mining and rubber opportunities–the country was in need of foreign capital–and fully half of his book is devoted to those investigations. He invested, one way or another and with irregular success, in several companies, including a rubber concession in the Acre and a gold mine in the eastern Andes.

From Bolivia, Conway ambled over to Chile, where he climbed Aconcagua, at 22,841 feet the highest peak in the Andes. Ever the gentleman, he stopped a few yards short of the summit in deference to his friend Fitzgerald's earlier failure to reach it. Conway then sailed south to Punta Arenas and attempted Saramiento in Tierra del Fuego, but was forced back by difficult terrain and bad weather (an hourly phenomenon at that latitude). Sarmiento was not conquered until more than a half-century later. Nonetheless, Conway came away with another prize of sorts: The Sarmiento ridge he had reached was later named Monte Conway. He published the Chile leg of his venture as *Aconcagua and Tierra del Fuego: A Book of Climbing, Travel, and Exploration* (1902).

After South America, Conway, now in his mid-forties, quit climbing (though he did a stint as president of the Alpine Club in the early 1900s) and turned down invitations to lead expeditions to Antarctic and Patagonia and to join an assault on Everest. He devoted the rest of his life to his business investments (which were as up-and-down as alpine topography; he often relied on loans from wealthy friends), a stint in parliament, and his eclectic intellectual pursuits, chiefly lecturing, writing, and the arts. He is probably the only mountaineer to have published books on the Himalayas, the Alps, the Andes, early Tuscan art, Soviet art, fifteenth-century Dutch woodcuts, the Van Eyck school, the writings of Albrecht Durer, and the psychology of the crowd (an odd topic for a man who sought the solitude of the wilds). Made a baron in 1931, Lord Conway of Allington died in 1937 at age 81.

Bug Off

Member Jim Castner has just published a photo guide of Amazon insects. Ever want to know what bit you as you were admiring the vegetation near the lodge? Well, there's a lot of bugs, beetles, and insects in this book in all their colorful glory. It's truly a work of art. Never has the Harlequin Beetle looked better. The same goes for the Giant Ceiba Borer, the Tortoise Beetle, the ferocious-looking Giant Scarab, and the multi-colored Click Beetles. Especially fine are the photographs of the superbly camouflaged Katydids that come in a variety of forms and colors resembling dead leaves and other vegetation. Sometimes we wish we had a glossy color section to do photographs such as these justice.

Convinced? Here's the specs: 160 pages, 200 photos, $15, Feline Press. Be a sport. Buy a couple extra and donate them to the clubhouses in South America so the club staff members won't be tempted to pinch ours when they pass through Ithaca. Send a check to: Feline Press, P.O. Box 357219, Gainesville, FL 326350

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World Guide to Vegetarianism

http://www.veg.org/veg/Guide/

Caught in meat-eating Argentina without a vegetable in sight? Don't despair. A vegetarian restaurant is as close as the next cyber cafe. A good way to track down vegetarian institutions in cities across South America. Type in La Paz, for example, for a run down of restaurants, including address, telephone number, if the eatery is Vegan-friendly, and hours. True, the listing is by no means complete, even a trifle skimpy, but with your help that might all change. Fill out the application form soliciting your valuable input online.

F-STOP: Film Safety for Traveling on Planes

http://f-stop.org/

Remember, a picture is worth a thousand words. That's why it is not a good idea to have them all fogged out when you pass through the airport security scanner. What to do? Visit this website for a list of steps to take to preserve your film until it gets processed. You won't regret it. Better safe than sorry. You don't believe us? Look on this website for a sample of a photograph damaged by an airport scanner.

Directory of the World's Embassies

http://www.escapeartist.com/embassy1/embassy1.htm

Lost your passport? Wife held captive by rebel guerillas? Call the embassy. This site will tell you in a jiffy if your country has an embassy in whatever country you happen to be in. Will the embassy spring your wife? Probably not, but notifying your embassy is what travelers do in emergencies. Incidentally, this is a well designed site. Simply type in Chile, and you can find out all the foreign countries—Canada, France, Juan de Nova Island, United States, and Venezuela—that have embassies there. Or type in United States for a list of all the countries where the U.S. has embassies. Very useful.

The Latin American Alliance

http://www.latinsynergy.org/

What do you really know about biodiversity, sustainable management, ecological distribution, genetics, habitat protection, and responsible tourism in Latin America? Probably zip. But it is not to late. After you visit this site you will be able to pull forth on all sorts of environmental subjects. Peruse an extensive selection of ecotourism articles, travel tips, statistics, and maps showing forest depletion. Posted by the World Stewardship Institute. A good resource for the green traveler.

Volcano World

http://volcano.und.nodak.edu/vw.html

Fascinated by things that go "BOOM" in the night? And during the day too, for that matter? Then this is the site for you— the self-proclaimed "Premier Source of Volcano Info" on the web. And that's no exaggeration. You can find volcanoes by region, country, name, or description. There's an engaging historical write-up of every volcano that notes recent eruptions and geographic statistics. You want pictures? There's that, too.

Centro Cultural Peru Virtual

http://www.perucultural.org.pe/

Fed up with reality? Prefer a good illusion? This site will save you a packet. Why spend a lot of money going to Lima, Cusco, and Arequipa when you can just sit in front of your computer and leisurely surf Peru's cultural treasures, clicking on masterpieces of art, visiting its glorious museums, touring (virtually, of course) its wonders of natural history, and its trove of cultural glories? It is true. No entrance fee at this site when you visit Pachacamac, Museo de Arte de Lima, Museo de Archeologia, and more. Is it really better than the real thing? Well, no. But it is free.

The Ten Great Birding Websites

http://www.acorn-online.com/hedge/tentop.html

Birders, make your dreary job bearable. When the boss steps out, bring up this site and zone out to the glorious squawk of the Hyacinth Macaw. Soak up the radiant colors of the Tufted Rufus Leafhopper. Go birding on company time. This site is a Mecca of bird information, with links to such wonderful sites as the Virtual Birder, The Nutty Birdwatcher, and the National Audubon Society. Think about using headphones. The call of a mating condor is infectious and might attract birders to your cubicle.

Derechos Cafe: A Human Rights Hangout

http://www.derechos.net/

Don't worry. This isn't Amnesty International. We didn't see any heavy stuff—torture victims, methods of coercing confessions, holding cells, etc. No, this is just a nice little site where you can hang out and learn a little bit about human rights. Want more? Here you can find opportunities for action and even meet others interested in human rights. There's also links to other human rights websites, articles on the same subject, reports, and upcoming events. You don't believe in human rights? Try

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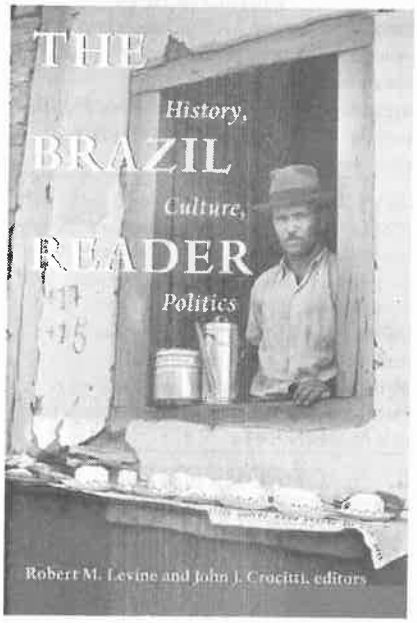
The Brazil Reader: History, Culture, Politics

ROBERT M. LEVINE AND JOHN J. CROCITTI, EDITORS

Durham: Duke University Press, 1999. 527 pages, paperback, $21.95



Following the footsteps of *The Peru Reader*, the first volume of the *Latin America Readers* series, *The Brazil Reader* is a comprehensive anthology providing an in-depth look at this diverse and captivating country. The first five sections cover Brazil's history from its discovery in 1500 to the present, while the remaining four parts deal with contemporary topics such as race relations, women, social realities and the arts. The editors do not present historic events in a strictly chronological order, but instead use a wide variety of eclectic materials to create a mosaic-like impression of Brazil's turbulent past and present. In addition to primary sources and scholarly analyses there are excerpts from web sites, letters, photographs, historic travel accounts and other documents, many of which appear for the first time in English translation.

Concerned with complementing rather than retelling Brazil's history, the editors chose numerous selections from unofficial and marginal sources. These diverse entries comprise a rich supplement to official history and add little-known and sometimes very personal perspectives to historic events. The first chapter contains a letter of a Jesuit missionary complaining about the Indians' heathen practices, and travel accounts about smuggling gold out of Brazil's hermetically sealed mining regions. Brazil's independence in 1822 is illustrated with the episode of Prince Regent Pedro riding along São Paulo's Ipiranga River and declaring the country "forevermore separated from Portugal." Other entries shed light on slavery and its abolition in 1888, civil unrest as well as plantation life and the Paraguayan War. After the end of the empire and proclamation of the republic in 1889 "Order and Progress" became an important slogan that symbolized Brazil's increasing industrialization.

The era of military president Getúlio Vargas from 1930 to 1954 is brought to life with a wide range of materials, from confiscated

communist correspondence, to political speeches and accounts by ordinary people, whose lives were changed by the nationalistic policies. Vargas' suicide in 1954, documented in the anthology by his farewell letter, paved the way for a short period of democratically elected presidents until the coup of 1964, which left the country under military rule until 1985. Several essays deal with the difficulties of musicians and writers to cope with the repressive regimes, and an excerpt from the 1967 constitution shows the military government's determination to maintain order under martial law-like conditions.

Reports about labor protests, the movement of landless peasants, and the country's problems with corruption demonstrate the slow and painful process of democratization that has taken place since the end of the military regime. President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, who has led Brazil into a new era of prosperity, is described as an advocate of socially progressive capitalism. In his inaugural address president Cardoso reminded Brazilians that the extreme inequalities among the different regions and social groups are the country's major obstacle to prosperity in the next century.

The chapters on Brazil's social conditions and culture contain entries about visual artist Tarsila do Amaral, television star Xuxa and soccer king Pelé, as well as Brazilians who don't normally have the opportunity to speak up. Women, Indians, blacks and street children tell about their lives, giving the reader valuable insights into their daily struggles.

The Brazil Reader's wide range of topics is deliberately kaleidoscopic, as the editors inform in the introduction, but the anthology is packed with so much information that it is difficult to separate relevant material from the anecdotal, and seminal events from the marginal. There are academic commentaries, government documents, essays written in the most lively, literary language and personal testimonies as barren and simple as the lives of the Brazilians who provided them. Unfortunately these various genres, voices and themes don't form a coherent narrative of Brazilian culture and history, which makes the book difficult to read and limits its value to a reference work. The editors also took pains to write one paragraph introductions to explain the historical context of their selections, but this editorial intervention further increases the anthology's text book quality. There is also an underlying agenda of political correctness. This is especially true for the chapters about contemporary issues, where The *Brazil Reader* becomes overly didactic and preachy, as in the essay "Mixed Blood" that discusses how Americans and Brazilians define skin colors differently, thus revealing the concept as a social construct.

What is missing the most throughout the book however, is the kind of optimism that is so omnipresent in Brazil. In the last chapter the editors affirm that "Brazilians do not permit their exuberance for life to be extinguished by setbacks." Yet the anthology's 527 pages are mostly filled with selections that emphasize the people's struggles and difficulties and give the book a bleak and somber aspect. There is very little opportunity for the reader to experience this 'exuberance' that is so much part of Brazilian life.

But despite the sometimes tiresome editorial slant and confusing array of materials, *The Brazil Reader* is probably the most insightful, comprehensive and updated book about Brazilian culture available to English speakers. For those readers who have a serious interest in Brazil, who want to go beyond the basics and deepen their knowledge about this complex and fascinating culture, *The Brazil Reader* is doubtlessly an informative and useful reference.

—VOLKER POELZL

Available through SAE. $21.95 [Members $19.95] Item #220. To order, call 800-274-0568.

Postales Salvadoreñas del Ayer, 1900-1950/Early Salvadoran Postcards, 1900-1950
STEPHEN GRANT

San Salvador, El Salvador: Fundación María Escalón de Nuñez, 1999. 328 pages, hardcover, $62.50

Immigrants were instrumental in the development of the postcard trade in El Salvador. Of nine pioneer postcard impresarios profiled in Stephen Grant's *Postales Salvadoreñas del Ayer, 1900-1950*, eight were immigrants or of immigrant families. Herbert de Sola's ancestors, for example, were Sephardic Jews from Spain who came to El Salvador by way of Holland and Curaçao. Bruno Hecht was from Prussia. Victor Josef Hellebuyck was native born, but his father was Dutch, of Belgian stock. Edwin E. Huber was an Ohio native of German ancestry.

For these entrepreneurial immigrants—most were merchants, shipping agents, or plantation owners—postcards were a sideline. And very few were themselves photographers. Aníbal J. Salazar, one of the scant native-born postcard distributors, was an exception. He was an early 1900s Salvadoran photographer who became one of the leading postcard publishers. Sadly, his photographic archives disappeared after the 1986 earthquake.

"Native types"—peasants in regional dress, costumed folklore groups, and colorful street vendors—are staples of the antique postcard genre, but they are largely absent here. The bulk of the views document plazas, streets, and buildings. Perhaps the civic-minded card distributors wished to tell the world, "look, we have imposing municipalities, clean streets, and modern theaters." Seen today, the cards evoke nostalgia for a vanished El Salvador—the Palacio Nacional, central post office, and Casa Blanca—destroyed in the country's frequent earthquakes and fires.

To say that Grant, a USAID education officer posted to El Salvador in 1996, is an antique postcard enthusiast would hardly begin to describe his passion. A rabid deltiologist, he has previously written books about postcards of French Guinea and the Dutch West Indies. *Postales* is a massive tome, crammed with information (data fall into a fourteen-category taxonomy) and printed in lush color, though awkwardly designed. Each of the one hundred showcased cards floats on a single large page in a sea of white space. With a more sensible layout, the book's hefty size (and price) could have been halved.

The earliest and most unusual view card, a 1901 image of Calle Mercado in San Salvador bearing the simple message, "Con mil besitos de Meches," is a reproduction of a colored drawing rather than a photograph. Postcards, photography, and printing processes went hand-in-hand. As the cards marched into the modern era, they advanced from black-and-white and sepia lithographs to chromolithographs to colored linens to actual photographs, but lost their magic along the way. Closing Grant's book are a smattering of 1990s cards, glossy color photographs devoid of emotion and intrigue, with none of the allure of their early 1900s ancestors.

—Daniel Buck

Available through Librería Punto Literario: puntolit@vianet.com.sv

Festival of Conception
Craig Carrozzi

San Francisco: Southern Trails, 2000. 191 pages, paperback, $15.00

Images of surf and sand, samba lines, bars, and the ornate crumbling colonial architecture of Brazil's Salvador da Bahia de Todos os Santos are backdrops for this reflection on life's meaning and direction by San Francisco's Craig Carrozzi. With companionable, streetwise language, he shows us sounds, visions, and characters that shaped his love affair with the Bahian culture and his choice to plunge into the depths of artistic life.

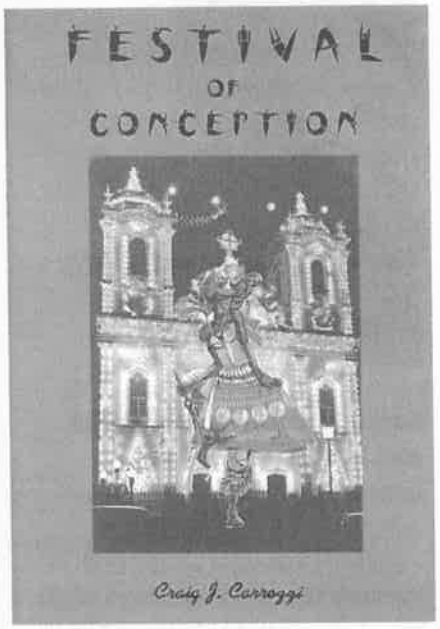
The narrative crystallizes a metaphor expressed in the book's title. The Festa da Conceicao—Festival of the Conception—is one of Salvador's oldest religious festivals, but not its classiest. Carrozzi is warned by a rich expatriate New Yorker that this celebration attracts mostly lowlifes, that it "can get very dangerous for foreigners," and that he should really skip it and wait for the "truly important and grand" Festa de Senhor de Bonfim. Hearing that the middle class ignores the Conceicao, Carrozzi responds, "You're making it sound better by the minute," and of course he goes, and we with him, through an encounter of frustrated love with a classy prostitute and an ugly tiff with drunk revelers which almost turns into serious violence. Through all the noise and confusion the modern world intrudes very little—we walk almost everywhere—which helps reduce the experience to its most essential elements and enable the clear conception of the future which the author reaches by the end: from the dancing mud will indeed grow the bright lotus.

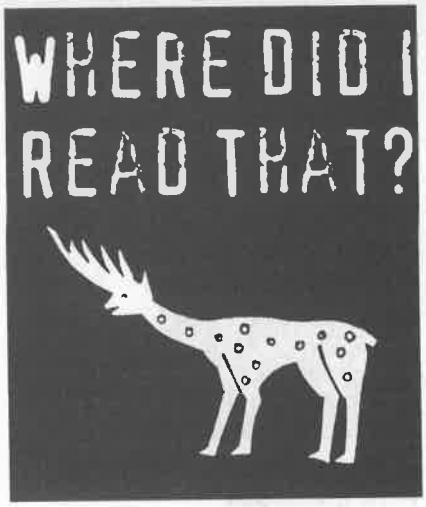
Carrozzi's fluency in Portuguese and Spanish gives him an ear for a world few non-Brazilians can know close-up, as we get to banter with bartenders, street vendors, Rasta musicians, and others. We float with hipsters on a

bus trip across Bahia and unexpectedly catch Gilberto Gil sitting in with a local band. The color and enthusiasm with which Carrozzi paints his characters—who are for the most part quite ordinary people—calls to mind, especially in its earthiness, some of Henry Miller's travel writings, though it lacks Miller's wild-eyed and blustery ignorance. It also occasionally recalls fellow ex-Peace Corps author Paul Theroux's stylish first-person accounts of "third-world" countries and their inhabitants. All in all, *Festival of Conception* is a great read for the vicarious traveler.

—Peter Montalbano

Available through Southern Trails Publishing. To order, see http://www.geocities.com/sotrails or call 415-467-8710.





1. Many are the tales of a glistening meteorite that fell on the Chaco plains in Northwest Argentina and then disappeared. Known as the "Mesón de Fierro," it was believed to be of pure silver by Spanish explorers and dwarfed other meteorites found in the area. Last seen and described in 1783, it was already vanishing under a cover of sand and vegetation. At one time a reward of 2,000 gold pesos and five square leagues of public land was promised to anyone who could reveal its location. Today, of course, it would be worth many times that amount. Does anyone have any information on the whereabouts of the Mesón de Fierro?

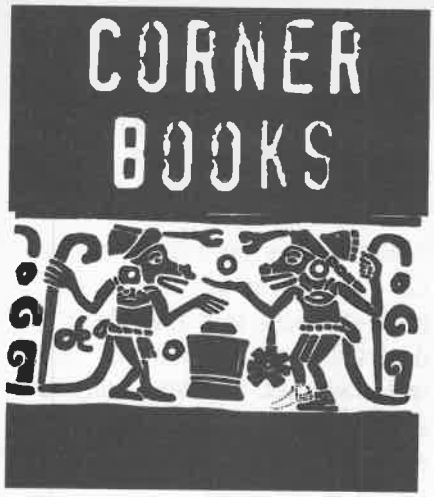
2. For a long time the Canadian Club Whiskey people ran a popular promotional treasure hunt by squirreling crates of their nectar in exotic locations around the world. The treasure seeker who discovered it received five hundred dollars and a free crate of whiskey every month for life. One such crate was stowed on Robinson Crusoe Island (one of the two islands that make up the Juan Fernández Archipelago), made famous by Daniel Defoe. Rumor has it that it was hidden in a cave opposite Santa Clara. I'm planning a trip to these islands soon. Does anyone know if the booty has ever been uncovered?

3. Anyone who has ever driven from Lima to Chosica might have seen a huge staircase that rises from the desert floor up into the hills. It's a wide staircase. Six men could stand side-by-side on a single step. Does anyone know who built these gigantic stairs and why?

4. In one of Col. Fawcett's books he describes birds that drill holes in rock cliffs. The birds collect some sort of jungle plant for this purpose, fly to the cliff and swab the vegetation on the rock face. As I recall Fawcett speculates acid in the vegetation might be what eats through the rock to make the hole (i.e. nest). I think that he also speculates that this might be something the Incas used to achieve their remarkably close-fitting stone creations. Has anyone ever heard of this technique or know the area that Fawcett is talking about?

5. I know this column is not generally aimed at helping writers find sources. Still, I'd like to ask the erudite readership if they know of any good sources for a biography I am writing on W.H. Hudson. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Please send questions and answers to explorer@samexplo.org



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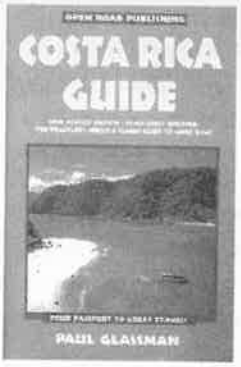

Costa Rica Guide

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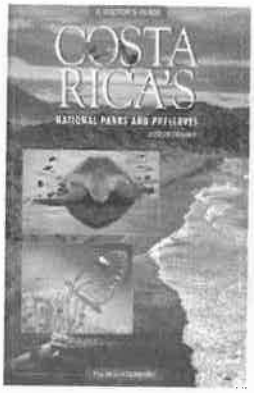

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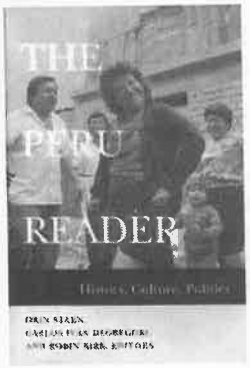

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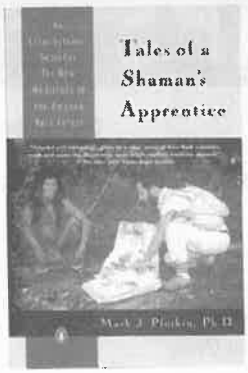

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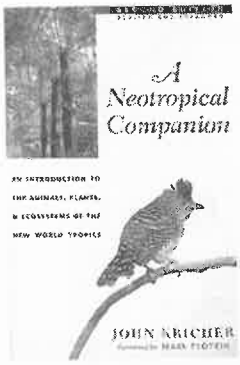

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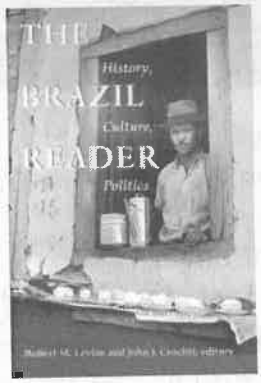

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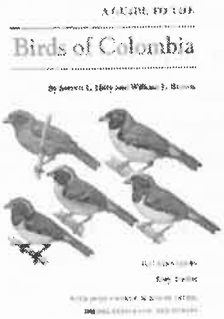

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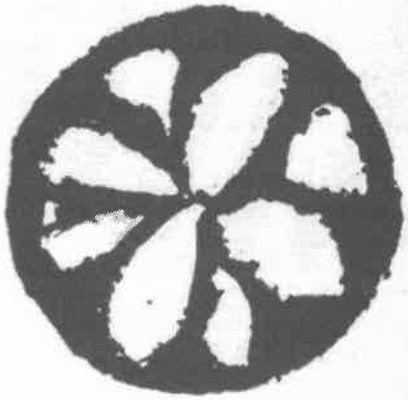

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